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THE HUNGER OF THE HEART
FOR FAITH
AND OTHER SERMONS
—
PIERCE

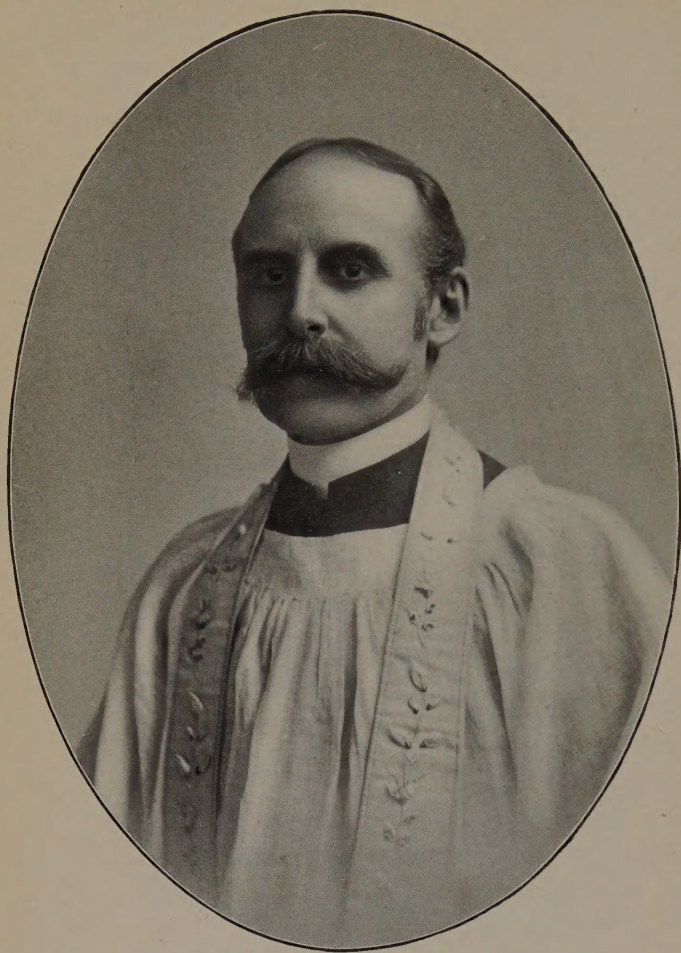




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The Hunger of the Heart for Faith



Charles Rene.

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The Hunger of the Heart for Faith And Other Sermons

Delivered at the
Cathedral Open-Air Services,
Washington, D. C.

BY THE
REV. CHARLES C. PIERCE, D.D.
Chaplain Corps of Engineers, United States Army

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
THE RT. REV. BISHOP SATTERLEE

Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION.



IN nineteen hundred and one, the Rev. Dr. Charles C. Pierce, who is a Chaplain in the United States Army, and also a clergyman of the Diocese of Washington, kindly consented to preach at an open-air service on the Cathedral grounds, and such was the influence and effect of his words, that I asked him to continue this service of his, again and again.

The congregations on Sunday afternoons at these open-air services are chiefly composed of non-churchgoers; many who do not enter the doors of the church from one year's end to another. They are drawn to these services partly on account of the unrestrained freedom they enjoy in attending them, and partly because the glad tidings of salvation are proclaimed by the preacher in such a simple, direct, and loving way, that those who hear him once, want to hear him again.

As year followed year, when the novelty of the services necessarily wore off, it became evident that there was a deeper influence at work, which drew this large and increasing congregation together. The message of God Himself was being felt by human hearts, and testimony came to me, from all sides, from individual men who had

been personally helped and strengthened in their lives through the sermons of Dr. Pierce.

By and by, followed the spontaneous request from different members of the congregation—which, as we have said, is composed not only of all denominations of Christians, but chiefly of non-church-goers—that certain of these sermons which had impressed and aided them in their spiritual life might be preserved in printed form.

Most of the sermons thus published are now out of print, and it is in answer to an ever-increasing demand, in which the very classes of whom we have been speaking have been most active, that this volume is set forth.

Every thoughtful person who glances over its pages will see at once, I am sure, the reason why the preacher's words took such a hold on human hearts, but yet none but those who have attended the open-air services themselves can realize their influence amid the surroundings of the Washington Cathedral Close.

Although this spot is now, and for some years to come will be at least two miles from the centre of Washington, one would never know from the large congregations present but that the Cathedral was situated in the heart of the city, and often a sense of wonderment has been expressed that so many people are induced to come so far with the limited means of transportation now provided.

The cause of the attractiveness of the People's Evensong on Sunday afternoons, however, is at once appreciated by anyone who has attended these services.

As the sun is sinking in the west, strains of music are wafted upon the air, in the voluntary before the service. The congregation as they gather face the city of Washington, lying in the valley four hundred feet below, where the exquisitely shaped white dome of the Capitol lifts its head above the reddish glow of clustered houses.

The leafy trees of the forest near by, frame in the landscape, or stand on either side, with their interlacing branches, like the Gothic aisles of a Cathedral. The breeze rustles through the leaves, the birds twitter in the branches, the commingled feelings of patriotism and religion which the beauty of the scene inspires are deepened by the spell of sacred music which floats in the air. Then the musicians, selected from the Marine Band, surround the Peace Cross; the keynote of the service is given in the theme of Mendelssohn's hymn of praise, "All who hath life and breath, praise ye the Lord"; and the service of Evensong, followed by the simple gospel message, gives spiritual reality to the devotional feelings of the moment.

The Peace Cross stands as a majestic sentinel in stone behind the preacher and is always before the eyes of the people as they look toward him. Beyond the preacher and the Cross lies the beautiful city, its domes and spires touched by the tints of coming sunset, and suggesting thoughts of that other city whose Builder and Maker is God.

One must picture in his mind a scene like this to realize how great was the power of the sermons in this little book at the time of their first utterance; for in this cathedral of the open air, the people seem to listen as they never do elsewhere, and hither they come when no other place attracts.

Happy must be the preacher whose pulpit stands thus among the trees, and whose message, having first been heard by a great congregation of earnest people, is asked for a second time, or yet a third, and a fourth, that it may, in the reading, gain an emphasis and insure perpetuation!

HENRY Y. SATTERLEE,

Bishop of Washington.

Feast of the Epiphany, 1906.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



HERE was no thought in the beginning as to the printing of these sermons. Somewhat against his own preference, the preacher has yielded to the suggestions of the unique congregation at the Open Air Services, who wished to preserve a few thoughts contained in some of them for use at home.

The selection of subjects from a wider range of topics has been governed by the same people, and the words are given in practically unaltered form.

The sermons were not prepared for homilists, but, without regard to other rule than helpfulness, have been offered to busy men and women, who, in the main, had fallen into the habit of avoiding other places of worship. Nobody is held responsible for them but the preacher.

That many have been moored to a satisfying faith by their aid is cause for gratitude to God, and may

be pardonable excuse for the wider preaching of the printed page.

To my beloved, whose confidence has been a beacon to orient and lure me on, I beg to dedicate the little volume, with a prayer to the Great Father that He may pardon every failure to interpret Him aright, and that He may shelter in His own fold all who have gathered for this cosmopolitan service at the "Peace Cross," from the north and the south and the east and the west and from the continents beyond the seas.

CHARLES C. PIERCE.

Fort Myer, Virginia, All Saints' Day, 1905.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.



ON this day, when Bishop Satterlee is placing a stone, quarried in Bethlehem, as the foundation-stone of the great Washington Cathedral, and a large and reverent concourse listen to President Roosevelt and the Lord Bishop of London, as they bring their salutations to the people of our Church in the United States, it is a matter of profound gratification to the writer that, having rounded out seven seasons of open-air preaching on this historic spot, and having preached the first sermons within the bounds of the great cathedral, he should be called upon to issue a second edition of these sermons.

May God bless the new volumes, as He has blessed the others, in bringing many readers into sympathy with the cause and kingdom of His dear Son!

CHARLES C. PIERCE.

Washington Barracks, D. C.,
Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, Sept. 29, 1907.

THE HUNGER OF THE HEART FOR FAITH.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."—St. Mark 9:24.



THE text is a part of St. Mark's reference to the great problem which confronted our Lord when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration. There are many aspects to the scene which call for interest and sympathy; the blight and bitterness of a father's heart over the limitations of human love; the epilepsy of a son; ~~for which the demons and not God were responsible~~; the paroxysms of this awful malady in the presence of them all, and the mental unbalancing which was worse than death. Ah, the sight of this sort of sorrow shrivels the ordinary troubles of men and makes us ashamed to tell them.

The case has been in the hands of the disciples,

but they have failed to do anything effective, and so the hope that mercifully turns men from one failure to a new test, brings this woe to the Master Himself, if perchance He can do anything.)

(We cannot tell how much hope this father had. Hope is hard to kill, but years of sorrow and disappointment are full of wear and tear, so far as the element of expectation is concerned, and though the *expectation* of hope may grow less and less, the *longing* of hope, which bids recourse to new expedients, always lingers where love is.)

(There does not seem to be a great deal of expectancy on his part, but he is full of yearning for the recovery of his son. ~~His faith is full of subjunctives,~~ but he is sure that he wants the Christ to *try* to help his boy and him. "If Thou *canst* do anything, have compassion on us and help us.")

— We have no further concern to-day with the miracle than to make a study of this father's mental attitude and to define, if we may, the sort of faith which he manifested and upon which our Lord bestowed His sympathy and help. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." We must be careful about reading into this remark any dogmatic definition of faith, because faith has temperamental types, and each man's definition is, perhaps, made with his own temperamental reservation.

“And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.”

Here was a declaration and yet a reservation. We cannot catch the whole significance of it from the words, although they give us the key. We need to see the face and the eyes of the speaker. Peter and James and John, who were in the company, had just been with our Lord as witnesses of His transfiguration. To them had come a clearer revelation of His Majesty. Perhaps their eyes shone with the steadiness of assurance and appreciation; with that peculiar quality which means the banishment of all misgiving and the utter reliance of trustfulness. No doubt you have seen that sort of face—a face which beams with the absolute expectancy of faith, and eyes that give assurance of their confidence.

But we do not see that kind of expression on this father's face. He has not heard Divine revelations. He has not been upon the Mount of Transfiguration. He is not assured of the divinity of Jesus. And if his face were like the others we should think him a skilful imitator, like others who subscribe to shibboleths by virtue of an easy memory rather than the impulse of conviction.

The superiority of Jesus he can appreciate. He can acknowledge His fame among the people. He has faith of that sort, which concedes His eminence

among men and His purity and kindliness. To that extent he believes; but there is a different look in the eyes from that of the others—the look of appeal and supplication. So far as he can believe, he does, but he is honest enough to admit the limitations of his faith, and Christ smiles in sympathy with his honesty. Some day he may go further, and with larger faith will come clearer statement and greater emphasis; but now he can only voice what faith he has and proclaim his desire for more.

Some of us may marvel at him just a little, but may it not be that his was the type of a temperament to be found in almost any age and place? Do not many men in our own day find themselves in the same epoch of spiritual experience?

It is a great thing to have faith; a blessed thing to be certain and unwavering in one's confidence and trust. And no man knows it better than the one who has tried to believe and thinks he cannot. None can put higher appraisal upon the benefit and blessing of an absolute faith than the one who has tried and given it up.

How happy a thing it would be to help such people—not those who scoff and sneer, not those who try to drag others into disbelief by ridicule and shallow sophistry—but those who believe, as they think, up to the limit of their temperamental capacity and yet are full of unbelief and sorrowful.

How much or how little one must believe in order to be saved, is for Almighty God to say, in each individual case. It ought to be an axiom, that no man can be censured justly for what he cannot help, nor condemned for failure to do what he cannot do. But whether one's inability to believe results from mental indolence or the handicap of temperament, God Himself knows better than anybody else.

A great many people have had their epochs of spiritual unrest and uncertainty, and are all the stronger for it; the light of to-day is more bright and all things are more clearly defined, because of the cloud and the fog from which they have emerged. But others linger in the fog, not because they like it, but because they do not know how to escape from it.

Are there not two sorts of faith exemplified in this chapter—the faith of assurance and the faith of appeal—in the confidence of the apostles on the one hand and the craving of this distressed father on the other? One may grieve that he cannot see things exactly as others see them. He may cry out in tears and anguish of soul unto God for help to believe; but he need not despair so long as his faith may have this qualified utterance, for his appeal is a creed in itself, and the uplifting of his hands is a language which God can understand.

It may profit you to study two sentences of Frederick W. Robertson, who ranked among the greatest

of our English Churchmen. It is important for the sentiment to have the endorsement of so strong a name. In a sermon on the desolation of Jesus on the cross, when the Master cried out in the agony of His heart: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" he said: "Mourning after an absent God is an evidence of love as strong as rejoicing in a present one. Nay, further, a man may be more decisively the servant of God and goodness while doubting His existence, and in the anguish of his soul crying for light, than while resting in a common creed and coldly serving Him."

172 The very appeal is a tribute to God. May we not say that there is a faith of the mind and a faith of the heart? One climbs to his creed by syllogisms, from premise to conclusion, and seems not only to know what he believes, but why he believes it. Another is averse to logic and clings to God in trustfulness through the magnetism of love. He does not know why he believes; it is enough for him that the character of God finds a response and an affinity in the impulses of his own soul. He may not exactly believe in the God of other men, at least, according to the portraiture given by other men, but he believes in God as he understands His portraiture in the gospel, and he worships what he sees. From the viewpoint of other men he may be an unbeliever, but his soul clings to an ideal which he finds in the Book of

God; and at least he can say: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And he may take to himself the words of the apostle: "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.")

It is something to know what is in your mind, but it is more to know what is in your heart, for out of the heart are the issues of life. The brain is the birthplace of ideas. The heart is the touchstone of impulse. The mind moulds creeds. The heart may have no spoken language, but it is a dynamo and it throbs motive into life.

Our great error is in seeking to compress each character into a common mould. One may know and another may feel, and yet both, by these devious processes, may reach God. It is infinitely better if one may check ideas against impulses, and so strike a balance in one's spiritual state, as heart and mind are made to tally. A clearly defined creed and a keenly sensitive soul, when they are associated, are like the process of addition which leads to a larger total.

But the object of the sermon to-day is to encourage those who cannot honestly express themselves in creeds, but who want a religion and who hunger after God. We want them to reach God by whatever path seems easiest and most natural. If there is in their hearts a longing after Him, we want them to realize that love answers to love, and that the appeal of the soul is magnetic unto God. "Blessed are they which

do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This is the beatitude of longing and desire, and in each of the beatitudes Jesus points a road toward God. One may not be clear in his creed at the beginning of his religious life, but he governs every action by the principle of mercy, because the mercy of God appeals to his soul. There is a beatitude for him, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Another has the same mental difficulty, but the purity of God becomes his ideal, and the struggle of his life is after that, because God is pure. This state has its beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Another may not understand the science of polemics, nor how each dogma has been the issue of a battle, but the affinity of his soul is for peace, and the breathing of Jesus on the world that peace might reign, appeals to him as the signal to a magnificent mission, and he so trains himself as to put men in accord with each other, to harmonize differences, to adjust difficulties and to weld humanity into unity by the doctrine of brotherhood. His reward is also beatific, for "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

No man need seek in our words a plea for the sacrifice of any of the great doctrines which the Church proclaims. Ultimately, it must be that all men who love God and study His Word will be led

to agree upon these matters, at least in the terms of the Apostles' Creed. But for to-day we want to meet, with the touch of brotherhood, all who are journeying toward God by these various paths and bid them journey on. The ways may be as various as human temperaments are.

Beyond all things, let us beseech all men who merely hunger after righteousness not to be turned out of the path upon which they have been started by the impulse of their hearts, simply because somebody says that they are wrong. The faith of the heart will lead to God. Let no man hold himself aloof from the Church simply because he has not the faith of an apostle. Let him come with what faith he has. It may be very dim and incomplete and indefinite, but the Church is the great Hospital of the Divine Paternity, where men are welcomed as they are, if only they seek to be cured and nursed into strength as children of God.

Above all credal uniformity God wants men to be honest with themselves and with Him. The faith of your heart may voice itself in no clearer notes than the appeal of my text: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief"; but the uplifted hands of human appeal meet the down-reached hands of divine benediction, and so the aspiring soul is "lifted up and strengthened."

"Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the

increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Collect for the Day.

O God, who on the mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses Thine only begotten Son wonderfully transfigured * * *; mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be permitted to behold the King in His beauty, who with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end.—Collect of the Transfiguration.

Lord, support us all day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and its battles all are done. Then, in Thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. *Amen, Lord Jesus—Amen.*—Collect at Eventide.

A FALSE NOTE IN THE SONG.

"And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."—St. Luke 15:28-31.



HIS beautiful parable has given a deal of consolation to the world, because there have been so many prodigal sons and daughters to thank God for it. Every preacher likes to use it, because it is at once so human and so divine. Like the diamond which flashes out its iridescence, no matter what light may touch it, so does the parable give out something to all of us, no matter by what path of experience we approach it.

But for to-day we shall leave the beaten track, crowded as it is with comforts and allurements, for a study of the sequel to the music and the mirth.

There is a note of discord in this parable of high life which it may profit us to consider. There ought not to be. The score itself is not faulty, and the chorus, as God means it to be sung, is perfect enough in its harmony to give scope for all the minstrelsy of heaven and to blend every voice in the world that may have music in it.

The popular interest centers in the younger son, as he compasses the whole gamut of earthly experience, and is brought by the ministry of misery and memory to make his confession and to plead for mercy. Thank God that Jesus left that part of the story as a legacy for sinners, and that He bound up, as necessary complements, the winning of the prodigal and the happiness of God! One would naturally think that there was nothing else to be said; that this part of the story had exhausted the exploitation of Divine magnanimity. But the discord adds another chapter to it.

There were two sons, instead of one. There was a good boy, upon whom heredity had left a deeper impress, or to whom a life of goodness had appealed with mightier force. He had never gone wrong, and his pure soul could not appreciate the experience of one who had. His whole life had been one of plod-

ding usefulness, without other emotion than a sense of duty; an ideal life in the sense of its consecration to high endeavor, but not ideal in its absence of contemplation; a dutiful life, but not a happy life, because he did not gain inspiration for his tasks and momentum for his toil by a survey of his constant blessings. We can see cause for his happiness, but he was too busy to enjoy.

When the chorus starts, he is at his habitual tasks, and stops to ask the meaning of the unwonted jubilation. He is told the story of the prodigal's redemption, and the father's gladness, the banquet and the music, but it does not appeal to him as just the right thing.

It is well that this part of the story is told, for it is necessary to its completeness, inasmuch as others also may get the idea that the jubilation puts a premium upon sin, and may be encouraged to sow their wild oats in order to gain capacity for appreciating absolution and restoration. Of this aspect of the matter we shall speak in a moment.

To him the whole thing seemed a little premature, and perhaps perilous to morals and religion. "He was angry and would not go in." We shall not deal in denunciation toward him, because his way is the way of the world. Society has an iron hand for one who goes wrong. The taint of evil which a sinner brings from his past, makes us suspicious that

his penitence may be unreal. We should like to put him on probation till he begins to irradiate a halo and to sprout his wings, and then, of course, when he proves up on his spiritual claim, we intend to be gracious.

It is not likely that God ever gave to any vicar or to any particular Church the exclusive power to bind or loose on earth. But it is plain enough that the frightful responsibility of that priestly power is assumed by society at large. If the social decree goes out "to bind," the whilom outcast finds it hard to break his shackles, and in the depression of popular suspicion or denunciation he loses hope and lapses into the old life. If society, on the other hand, swayed into magnanimity by the generous action of some great souls who have the power of leadership, decrees "to loose," and offers the glad hand of confidence and fellowship, the sinner, absolved by its priesthood, begins to live again.

Considering the habit of humanity, to burn the bridges over which sinners have passed to their prodigality (and that this is no slander, please consider that the most struggling and inadequate of all our charities are the agencies for putting discharged prisoners upon their feet, and the Homes of the Good Shepherd wherein the rescue of fallen Magdalens is sought), it is not strange that this good man was

angry at the lavish attention paid to a prodigal with such a bad history.

But when we read that "Therefore came his father out and entreated him," it gives a still higher climax to the Father's magnanimity than we have realized before. The thought of the Master when He put this final touch upon the parable must have been that God could not be satisfied with any note of discord in so gladsome an episode as the turning homeward of a wayward child. The very fact that one heart nursed a feeling of neglect and resentment, set him a Father's ministry to put that soul at peace.

You may share the feeling of this elder son. But you must not forget that your peace of mind is as dear to God as the happiness of one who riots in the far country while you are prosaically doing your best from day to day. As the harp has strings which vary in vibration under the same touch, and thus give out differing tones, so the heart of man may have varying intensities of affection, and may be big enough to assign a place to many objects. And the heart of God may thrill over the reinstatement of the sinner who tries to get right, while it rejoices in a very different measure over the soul that has always endeavored to stay right.

There is one point in which it is hard to sympathize with this elder brother. It is when he says:

"But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath

devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

"With harlots"? Perhaps this is in the story, but if so, it must be between the lines. It looks somewhat like an assumption. It is so easy to impute greater wrong to other people than they ever knew. Like the editor who writes a vitriolic editorial on a press dispatch that is not true, we are apt to start off with things which do not please us in the character of others, and end with so large a catalog of charges as to make it a defamation.

In actual life, the worst is always bad enough, without the accumulations of a suspicious imagination. This new specification of immorality was not necessary to make out a bad case. To have been swineherd was bad enough in the mind of a Jew; to have fallen so low in the scale as to be the care-taker of objects so despised that Hebrews would not pollute their lips by speaking their name, but always called them "the other things."

It is unfortunate that this other charge was dragged in, because it gives a strained definition to sin, and confounds it with the grossest immorality. It may be that the charge was just, but the prodigal had become a sinner before he got so far as that. The far country is any place where God may be forgotten. It is not bounded by the limitation of depraved morals, except on its outer line. The nearer

boundary may include many a character who would scorn to violate the weightier prohibitions of the law. Indeed, the soul that keeps itself free from the taint of every gross desire and prides itself upon its cleanness, may be in the far country and away from God. Vice is not the measure of sin. Jesus made a new code of the Ten Commandments, and under the expansiveness of His interpretation—making sin a matter of mind and motive rather than of overt action—we have learned to measure our distance from Him by mental attitudes and spiritual impulses; and we often know ourselves to be sinners, when other men have no knowledge, and therefore no way to measure us.

But the greatest error of this elder brother (and it would not be fair to talk about him if we were not led captive of similar hallucinations) is that he makes a statement about his father which is false.

“And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.”

“Thou never gavest me a kid, and thou hast given this dissolute son the fatted calf, which has been kept, according to the family custom, always ready for some unusual occasion for jubilation. Never a kid, even, for me.” But stop. Did we not read in the very

beginning of the parable, that "He divided unto them," both of them, "his living"? And it is the custom of the Orientals to give the elder son the lion's share. Then this charge is plainly untrue. And our Lord has the father make answer, "Son," (or to be literal) "My child, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Ah, he had forgotten, in the prosy sort of daily serving which he followed, that he had anything at all. The whole estate was his. Lord of the Manor was he, and he never knew it. What culpable forgetfulness! What hallucination of poverty amid the holdings of a great proprietorship! But let us wait, before we condemn. God has many children of this same forgetful sort. So many of us forget the fact of heritage. That we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," is not always a fact present to Christian consciousness, a realization of memory. Ours is a hard lot. Others get the fatted calf, and not even a kid for a miniature banquet belongs to us. Such are the reflections—hallucinations, let us rather say—with which we burden ourselves.

Ah, my friend, it must be your trouble that you have not learned to count your blessings. But do not let your ignorance of the process of addition lead you to think that there is nothing beyond the power of your paltry mathematics to appreciate. If you pin your gaze to the earth you can never see the constella-

tions and the star dust that glint the heavens. If you look only at the spots where your feet are to be planted, you will miss the beauty at the right and left which blooms to cheer and sweeten all your journey through the years.

Almighty God has no poor children. None of them can be crowded out of fortune by any earthly law of primogeniture. Let other prodigals enjoy their banqueting. The estate is ample for us all. And the most prosaic plodder among us has all the bounty of an Infinite Father to draw upon, in the distresses of his life. Lift up your hearts, and put a bit of brightness in your faces, "that ye appear not unto men to fast." They will not know that "One is your Father, even God," if you incline to melancholy. It is not a prospect, merely, that you own, but a mine; and there is wealth beyond your need if you only dig and assay and weigh and count.

Let us look now, at a final question, which is, perhaps, natural after reading this parable, and particularly in view of the statement of our Lord concerning another one, that "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

This is the question: Is it better to be a sinner and redeemed, than righteous and not in need of it? Sometimes we emphasize the concern of God over wandering souls in a way to lead up to that question.

It really ought to answer itself when we stop to think.

One has said :

“Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.”

No prodigal amid the fetes of his restoration can ever be glad that he went astray. He must feel that many chapters of a beautiful story have been lost out of the book of his life. And he must know that harvests follow sowing, and that the mercy that gives him a sinner's welcome and absolution can hardly operate to overcome all the evil that his life has wrought.

Sins leave sore spots. They serve to magnify the mercy that forgives, but they always cause regret. And, regardless of all the joy that may swell the hearts and halls of the eternal city, the very fact of his former sin makes it impossible for even the happiest of redeemed prodigals to say what this elder brother said, and said without a syllable of paternal reproof: “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.” The salve of mercy relieves the awful sting, and one who comes home from the far-country gains a view of God that is all his own, and appreciates heaven in some different way from the angels, but he can not look at those who never knew the agony of

losing Paradise, without coveting their innocence and the blessed continuity of their happy life with God. To give the remnants is not like giving a lifetime of service to God. We often think of the joy of the dying malefactor whose soul leaped up to meet the mercy of a dying God. But amid all the bliss of an unmerited Paradise he must have looked with a wonder that was full of longing for an impossible experience, upon the just in God's Kingdom who never need repentance.

But if this is true—and it seems to be a logical and irremediable fact—why is it said that there is more joy in heaven over a sinner redeemed than the saint who never fell? It cannot be because the love of God is given in any fuller measure to the prodigals. The joy is not merely the happiness in the heart of God, but the joy throughout the great city. The jubilation is one that gains volume from its breadth. Every voice in heaven adds to the great acclaim. All these hosts to whom heaven is an ever-present reality, and upon whom the face of God beams perpetual benediction, realize what the home-coming will mean to the prodigals throughout the ages that are to be. It has been their ministry to watch on the battlements for the home-turned faces of the children, or to flash a thought of home and God into the hearts of the famine-stricken in the far-off land. And not

only God Himself is stirred to jubilation, when the triumph comes, but they whose happiness feeds upon His joy must join their voices in the same song; and so there is more joy over the sinner than the others, because the others help to sound it forth.

To have been ever with God is an experience of angels. We can never know it, but we can strive to eliminate sin from our own characters, by little and little, and so can enter heaven with the minimum of regret.

We can never be angels, although we shall always wish that we had been more like them; but there will be an infinite delight in the blessing of restoration. That experience is open to us all, whether we be far off in our sins or struggling in prayerfulness and tears to do God's will. Let us claim it, in gratefulness for the mercy that measures itself by a cross.

The far-country is not meant to be home. Sin is not normal. There is bitterness and sorrow, in the last analysis, for every soul far-off. God help us to come home! to hear some whispering of a better life! to catch some vision of His own unrest! to leave forever the things that harm us, and to follow up the resolution of the prodigal and say: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. Make me as thy bond slave."


"O Paradise! O Paradise!
Who doth not crave for rest?
Who would not seek the happy land
Where they that loved are blest?
Where loyal hearts and true,
Stand ever in the light;
All rapture through and through
In God's most holy sight.

"O Paradise! O Paradise!
I want to sin no more,
I want to be as pure on earth
As on Thy spotless shore;
Where loyal hearts, and true,
Stand ever in the light;
All rapture through and through
In God's most holy sight.

"Lord Jesus, King of Paradise,
O keep me in Thy love,
And guide me to that happy land
Of perfect rest above;
Where loyal hearts, and true,
Stand ever in the light;
All rapture through and through
In God's most holy sight."

FORGETTING AND ASPIRING.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Philippians 3:13 and 14.

 ANY men rush on through a part of their life as if in a mad delirium or captive to some malign control. They seem to be in that "broad road that leads to death." But everybody knows who stops to think under the illumination of God's word and the facts of daily experience, that that road, broad as it is, thronged as it may be, and retributive as may be its end, is neither hedged nor fenced, and that every inch of its course there is egress and possibility of passage toward a narrower way and a more satisfying life.

The mad rush and the reckless life mean something, but they do not mean everything. They are to

a certain extent indexes of character, and they must be given a value among the percentages that enter into prophecies of destiny. But he reckons only poorly who does not regard the physical law that every running enjoins a resting; and also the mental and merciful necessity that with the resting there comes a time to think. Here is the time for a study of possibilities. Not when the rush is on and the delirium is working itself off in unholy exercise, but when, exhausted, tired, and disgusted, the soul submits to the flagellation of conscience, and the victim takes time to count the cost.

There have been a good many prodigal sons and daughters who have decided in such moments that the husks are hardly worth while, because the hunger lasts. And many a soul, having never lost memory of God, has dreamed a palace up from the ashes and embers of a ruined past.

It is a merciful thing that these bodies get so tired that the mind secures a hearing. There is a "cold, grey dawn of the morning after," for everybody who does wrong. Nobody's life is locked always in the unprolific embrace of winter. Time always ushers in a season for the crop to spring from the seed of a season gone. Thank God for conscience, for when it dies, hope of all progress dies, chaos comes, and Satan triumphs.

There are a good many grades of sanctity, from

the embryo to the finished product, but it is safe to say, after one has heard the story of every sort of life, and has had experiences of his own, that everybody in this world has reason to be sorry for something that might have been done in a better way. Everybody has personal proof of the possession of a conscience, by reason of its pricking in his soul. Humanity is all of a piece; damaged more or less, or rescued from its stains by spiritual exercise. And, like the apostle, nobody counts himself to have apprehended. The mark is always just beyond his leap. And if he should, by some Herculean bound, gain the goal of a perfect soul, there is always an angel waiting to lead him into the realm where angels ought to live.

Do not think that we are talking down the average of humanity in order to bring anybody up toward the standard of average goodness. It is not averages we are after, but facts; for in the recognition of disease is found the first requisite of a cure.

If in the veins of our common humanity there courses a tainted blood; if conscience keeps on throbbing till there is a sore spot in everybody's heart; what shall we do about it? This is the vital question. Let the apostle speak to us, for he was a man, bearing a common affliction, and he never claimed himself an angel:

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things

which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

FORGETTING AND ASPIRING.

Forgetting and aspiring; forgetting and forging on; this double exercise must mark all our days till we brush our very mantles against the ideal.

FORGETTING.

There is weakness in the memory of a failure. To a certain extent it unnerves one in any new attempt. It is hard for a man to become a champion again, after he has lost the belt. If he is always remembering that he failed before, he is so apt to find himself secretly expecting to fail again. The apostle teaches a new lesson. We must eliminate this weakening factor, by learning to forget. It is a mistake to suppose that we contribute to God's honor by calling up constantly the failures and sins of the past. Perhaps this has been your thought, that you must show your horror and your penitence by wearing about with you, as the devotee wears her scapular, the remembrance of all your shortcomings. God is willing to be done with them. He seems so infinitely less concerned with your past than with your future.

It was no idle ceremony when, in the olden time, after confession of the sins of the people, they were figuratively placed on the head of the scape-goat, and

he was turned free to dart away into the wilderness. It was a symbol of the completeness with which God was putting away the memory of sin. It meant that He was done with it absolutely and irrevocably. Just so does He mean the culprit in his penitence to do; to let it go. He means His pardon to be as potent as the kiss of a mother which is so full of magic to dry the tears of her child. We do not honor God by mourning, after we have been shriven by the Great Confessor. We honor Him best by forgetting. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

If cleansed, why act as if the Divine Alchemy of the blood of Jesus had lost its power and we are yet unclean? God bids us bring our sin and bear a song away. To carry our burden after we have laid it at His feet, shows a lack of faith; it dishonors Him. No man that lives has forgotten what his dear old mother meant when in his childish troubles she bade him "never mind." He always took her at her word and did not mind any longer. Indeed, the bulk of his misdoings have gone so far into the past that he could not recall them if he tried. They are absolutely forgotten. God wants us to be with Him "As one whom his mother comforteth." And He seems more than willing that we should be helped in our future struggles by the removal of this weakness

which lurks in the memory of sin. There is something more than rhythm and metre in the poet's words:

“As the dead year is clasped by a dead December,
So let your dead sins with your dead days lie.
A new life is yours, and a new hope! Remember
We build our own ladders to climb to the sky.
Stand out in the sunlight of promise, forgetting
Whatever your past held of sorrow or wrong;
We waste half our strength in a useless regretting.
We sit by old tombs in the dark too long.”

Repentance is not all of religion, and sorrow is not all of repentance. Martin Luther's definition is a good one: “To do so no more is the truest repentance.”

If a debtor should count up from day to day the accounts he had already paid, and should add them to his liabilities, visions of bankruptcy would disturb his brain. But people sometimes pursue this policy toward the Divine Creditor, and by dwelling on their past they imagine that they have committed the “unpardonable sin.” Such a policy wrongs God and it weakens man. Forgetting the past is ridding the soul of a handicap in the race of life. To stop brooding and repining and counting as spiritual liabilities those delinquencies which God in His mercy has already discharged and blotted out, is to put one in the line of progress toward the soul's ideal.

FORGING ON.

But no man dreams himself into Paradise. It is

not all a mental process, nor a correction of ideas and attitudes. It is a matter of athletics as much as attitudes. To be rid of a handicap is a good deal, but it is not all. If it is necessary for one to put his back to the past, it is necessary for him to turn his face to the future. And all the hosts in the Kingdom of God, interested in man's success with a partiality which they have caught from the contagion of Divine love, call out to him with all the fervor of their faith in his final victory to press forward toward the mark. Every step that he takes scores a double triumph; it lengthens the distance between him and the past which he deplures, and it lessens his distance from the goal.

It is depressing when we realize the distance to be traversed before we can be all that our better nature prompts, but all progress comes by advances that are infinitesimal—nature builds by atoms, and the child comes to man's estate through a measurement of time by heart-beats—and so the advance of the soul is furthered by every little thing that is right. Millions are counted by units; miles are traversed by steps; islands are massed by the deposit of one tiny insect upon another; and the soul comes to its maturity by treating each duty as sacred and doing its best from day to day.

Every analogy in nature teaches that he who builds strongly builds slowly. The plant which

springs up in a season finds its succulence a weakness in the time of frost. But the oak, which took time to be little and seemed long in gaining a worthy place in the landscape, finds itself fibred well against the cold and rooted securely against the storm.

We want to be good all through in a minute, and God must be glad at that. But if we are to have something more sturdy in our characters than mere spiritual succulence, we shall need time for development. We shall reach the prize by simply pressing on; doing the duty that lies next, and often being satisfied with very little things to do. But the man who can spurn little duties is no fit kinsman of the Christ, and he will find often that the only path of progress is strewn with opportunities which seem but trifling, and that if, spurning these, he has sought always great things to do, he has gotten out of the way.

Ideals are good to have, else we guide our craft astray, but sometimes they are depressing, because we keep constantly looking at them and realizing how far away they are. Ideals are like moulds into which we fit life's finished products. Or, to change the figure, ideals are like beacons which lure us on through successive failures and attempts until, as we reach them, we find ourselves in the haven of perpetual peace. No man can be a success without an ideal, and no man has a really worthy

one who expects to reach it every day. An ideal is the big thing which one puts at the end of his striving, and he is doing well if he gets a little nearer to it day by day.

This is his mission—not to be an ideal man in a real world—but to grow toward the perfect pattern as the days go by. There is nothing depressing in that. The thing he needs to do is the thing he is well able to do, just to press on and on. He does not need to be conscious of his progress every day. All he needs to know is that he is keeping at it, doing his best, trying to do his Master's work in his Master's way; putting his soul into whatever work he does, and trying more and more to realize that God is his Father and all men are his brothers. God will "add the cubits to his stature." All the Christian needs to do is to keep on trying to do, in the best way he can and with the best spirit, the things which come within his reach, and to be always at it. He will often fail, but he can put the old failure out of sight and try the new thing as it presents itself. He will be advancing all the while, and even when he least suspects it. More and more his progress will be apparent to his fellow-men, and more and more they will learn to seek his counsel and lean upon him. Growth is not always a matter of consciousness, but it is a matter for external observation.

God grant that in your pursuit of the prize which

is set before every man, you may be just to Him and just to yourselves, and that, with your backs to the past, and with all brooding banished from your hearts, you may live at your best, just a day at a time; and never losing sight of the fact that His "Well done" is the climax of all praise known in the universe, you may be so broad, and generous, and clean, and helpful, that the encomium of the King may await you at the end, in the Kingdom prepared for you.

"Have you missed in your aim? Well, the mark is still shining;

Did you faint in the race? Well, take breath for the next;

Did the clouds drive you back? But see yonder their lining;

Were you tempted and fell? Let it serve for a text.

As each year hurries by, let it join that procession

Of skeleton shapes that march down to the past,

While you take your place in the line of progression,

With your eyes on the heavens, your face to the blast.

I tell you the future can hold no terrors

For any sad soul while the stars revolve,

If he will but stand firm on the grave of his errors,

And instead of regretting, resolve, resolve!

It is never too late to begin rebuilding,

Though all into ruins your life seems hurled.

For look! how the light of a new day is gilding

The worn, wan face of the bruised old world."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

There may be a special meaning in all this for those workers for Christ and for charity who may have come hither to-day with a sense of jubilation. All the good things you have wrought must bear a tribute to the continuity of your labor and a persistence in well-doing. Surely these are commend-

able, and it is always more than pardonable to celebrate a triumph. But we need to have it always in mind that jubilation is only useful as it serves as a tonic, as it deepens the thought that it is worth while to expend one's self for others, and as it stimulates resolution and quickens impulse for the future.

When jubilation reaches the point of intoxication, when self-glorification is its essence, when no pulses are quickened in view of future opportunities, and no heart is moved toward a larger daring, then it is profitless and vain. Heights are vantage points from which valleys may be better viewed. The man who uses them simply to enjoy the altitude, having no thought for the points that lie beyond and the trails that lie between, misses an opportunity.

It surely is not wrong to surmise that your triumph has not measured half your hopes. The memory of many failures has punctured the bellows so that the organ does not voice the full power of diapason. It is right for your hearts to thrill because you have had the will to escape mere spasmodics and intermittences in your work for God, and that you have had the grace of continuity and persistence. The Great Harvester has had joy in every evidence of your sowing, and tilling, and care, and some day you will have reminder from His lips that will be very sweet. But looking backward is no fit occupation, unless one is seeking an avenue for retreat. To

go forward is the mission of the Israel of God. The only fit outcome of one campaign is to plan for another. The best legacy any victory can leave us is the prophecy of a larger one.

There is no wish on the part of any of us to minimize the splendid things you may have done. But such accomplishments speak of your capacity for even larger things. Do not let it poison any celebration, that you have failed in many things. Let that be forgotten in your vows for the future. The God of Israel expects a completer triumph at your hands, because you are His children, born into His Kingdom for the conquest of the world.

JESUS AS COUNSELLOR AND ADVOCATE.

2
“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”—St. Matthew 11:1-10.



THESE verses are far too full, in their wealth of suggestion, for us to compass everything in the time allotted. In a general survey, they present our Lord in a dual aspect, as Counsellor and Counsel; as the Great Confessor to whom is brought the troubles of

one disciple; and as the Matchless Advocate, mantling with Divine Charity the character of John, discovering, as a seer, qualities that would perpetuate his fame in the Church, and making of His own confidence in the man a fortress to protect His friend from the criticism of those who never see character as it really is.

JESUS AS THE COUNSELLOR.

First there is a view of Jesus as the Counsellor to whom one may come in spite of his doubts; to whom one may bring his doubts. Doubt so often means disunion and separation. Some misgiving as to creed separates us from the Church. Some difficulty, either mental or spiritual, causes us to neglect the Lord's table. The fact of doubt accentuates the need for touch with Christ. The greater one's weakness the more emphatic is one's need for spiritual nutrition from the body and blood of Jesus. The very fact of sorrow and trouble beyond the power of earthly ministry to relieve, makes more necessary the service of that Divine Ambassador who came from the Court of Heaven with plenary powers to treat with us.

One of the things we should particularly note is the gentleness and consideration which our Lord shows to John the Baptist in this crisis of his life. There is no word of censure; no expression of dis-

appointment. Indeed, the man does not understand himself so well as the Son of God understands him. It seems even as if our Lord had recognized that his doubts were natural and pardonable; that his experience and his surroundings might naturally be expected to cloud his soul and put his Christian assurance in a state of eclipse. There is no sermon preached on the folly or the sin of doubting. No warning is given to the others against the sad state of this disciple. The whole incident is treated as one of those ailments of the mind which may be the natural sequence of certain experiences. And surely no teacher ever gave more gentle tuition to a pupil whose mind failed to grasp the first principles of a difficult lesson, than this Great Teacher manifested toward the mental troubles of His friend. Because (in spite of the attempts that have been made to show that John was not possessed by doubts, and that he merely sent these followers of his to the Master with a question whose answer would ground them more securely in the fundamentals of the Christian life), the fact remains clearly enough, as we see it, that John was asking for himself. It was the agitation of his own heart that he wanted to have relieved. It was the depression of his own misgiving which he bade his followers carry to the Christ. It was the question of his own crisis. He was troubled in his own mind.

He had dedicated his life to God as a prophet, and

he had prosecuted his mission with rare self-denial and most rigorous asceticism. Clothed in coarse fabric and subsisting upon plainest food, he was pondering in his heart the great truths of God, when there came to him a revelation of the Divine Sonship of Jesus, and he went on, in the confidence that the Kingdom of God had begun on earth, calling the people to righteousness and rebuking the vices of the day, until vice became triumphant and he was thrown into prison. Here he had suffered for perhaps little less than a year. He knew something of what was going on on the outside. The government was rotten to the core. The court was corrupt and licentious, and everything seemed to be going wrong. If Jesus were indeed the long-sought King of the Jewish race, it would be easy for Him to make proclamation and achieve enthronement and so bring to an end the reign of wrong.

Ah, this thing we call faith so often thrives on poetry, and song, and sunshine, and the mellow light of cathedral windows—the breath of flowers and the song of birds and the sense of liberty. Do not pride yourself on having it, just because your environment is congenial. The brightest flower that blooms will fade and sicken if you give it the shade and the vapors of a prison cell. The prose of real life with its dramatic parentheses and its pathetic punctuations may reveal to you some things about yourself

that you never knew before. When the man who does the best seems to fare the worst, then it is that the soul sends up its message of misgiving as to the Divinity and the sufficiency of Jesus.

"I like the man who faces what he must
 With step triumphant, and a heart of cheer:
 Who fights the daily battle without fear;
 Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
 That God is God; that somehow, true and just
 His plans work out for mortals."

Sarah K. Bolton.

We like such a man, because the world needs him for the bracing of other men. And such men do exist—thanks be to God for their blessed help—but to so many there come days of wavering and mistrust. It does not help any of us to know that anybody else has gone wrong, but it does help us to know that some other men who are good and godly have had their hours of difficulty and mental depression, because that breathes hope for us. The most of us want to do right. We want to know God. Many of us have our difficulties in matters of creed which we should be glad to have solved and satisfied.

The point we find impressed in this lesson is the sympathy of Jesus with the mental distresses and perplexities of men; indeed, may we not say, the sympathy of Jesus with the misgivings of honest doubt? Many men and women who separate themselves from the Church because they do not believe

as the Church believes, ought to be put upon a special spiritual diet. The din of modern interpreters and definitions might be stilled; the voice of prophets and apostles might be silenced for a time, and the doubter should be confined to a study of the four gospels, with their simple story of the life of Jesus. After all, He is the Supreme Counsellor. And as the reading of any history will develop admiration for the men who were the pivots for its epochs, so every really good man will be brought to venerate the character of Jesus, if he can be shut up with Him in the story of the gospels.

This was all that was done to solve the perplexities of John the Baptist. The Master's character was vindicated by the Master's ministry. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." The defense is not credal but visual. And so we shall not talk to the doubters about creeds but about Christ. We shall bid them read the story and ponder His sayings, and then ask them, not whether their minds fit our own moulds, but "What think ye of Christ?" We are not afraid of the issue if we can only confine them to the contemplation of this one sublime character—what He did and what He said. There is not a good man living who can assail His character or who would care to criticise the say-

ings that have already revolutionized our civilization and are destined yet to evolve a grander era.

Do not forget that our Lord is the most patient listener and the most sympathetic friend one can have, no matter what may be one's difficulty or one's doubt, and that He offers Himself—His sayings and His deeds—as the answer, the best answer, to the questioning of every troubled heart. Could we but see Him we should be satisfied.

JESUS AS AN ADVOCATE.

But the text presents Him also in another aspect. In the most gentle and sympathetic way He treats the difficulty of the Baptist and then He turns to the people to talk about John, taking up a line of defense.

“And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”

Many people have a horror of a heretic, and some of them have a peculiar feeling about one who doubts.

Perhaps this may be the case with those who have heard the question of John, and our Lord at once becomes the Counsel for the Accused before the Court set up in every critic's heart. They must not get the thought that John is an apostate, just because his heart has been troubled. Beyond the crisis there is to be a spiritual convalescence. Infinite vision bounds over all human limitations, and, finding motives and morals to be right, quickly makes defense against all superficial criticism. This is one of the most comforting suggestions of this lesson; that for the soul who struggles for the thing that is right, and is righteous in his desires and aspirations, even though he may be hindered by his environment from being what he wants to be—that for such a soul our Lord consents to act as Counsel, to defend him against all calumny and detraction.

In another place it is written that “If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.” That verse was written for our comfort, for, in spite of the fact that there is no warrant for it in the gospels, we are apt to feel that there is so great a difference between the magnanimity of Jesus and the gentleness of God, that we need some Pocahontas-theory of forgiveness, whereby the heart of God in its clamor for vengeance may be reluctantly arrested in its malevolent designs by the personal interposition of Christ. “God is love,” and the very

presence of His Son in man's world emphasizes it. There would have been no star over Bethlehem had not God bade it shine. Angels never would have carolled for the world's Christmas morning and chanted of "Peace on Earth," had not God set them singing and taught them the song.

But so strong is the revolt in our souls against the sins that gain dominion over us, that we cannot appreciate the fulness of Divine magnanimity, and our consciences make us feel so guilty and mean that we feel the need of an Advocate. Very well; the lesson brings its hint that, before any tribunal where we need defense, we shall have counsel who speaks the language of the Court, who knows every syllable of the law, and who knows as well every good thought, every pathetic prayer, every aspiring hope, and every palliative circumstance, and that these things represent the real man far better than the momentary lapse of his life into unrighteousness.

It must have touched the heart of John the Baptist in his far-off prison, and loosed the fountain of grateful tears, if he ever learned that, in the moment of his doubt, Jesus was pleading for him before the bar of public opinion, and was defending him so earnestly as His friend. Surely this must mean something to us. All of us need a conscience, else we should go farther astray than we do. But conscience is a harassing thing, and we find it hard to hope for

more than a reluctant opening of the Gates of Heaven for us when life is ended. Even that would be worth the aspiration of a lifetime. But the gospel sounds a more joyous note. There is never a reluctant opening of the portals of the great city. The salvation of a soul makes heaven a happier place for God and the angels. It is almost too good to believe, but it is the good news in the story that makes it a gospel. And it may be that some of us who make but little progress toward Heaven by the painful way of fear, might be lured into taking mightier strides, could we but feel the magnetism of God's love for us. That our Lord came to the rescue of His imprisoned servant ought to show us that He will care for us in the soul's great crisis.

As He hung on the cross, He cared for one whose life had been a pursuit of evil, but He took the agonized prayer for mercy as laying bare the soul of the real man, and pledged Himself as a special convoy to Paradise.

Thank God, not so much for what we are, as what we want to be, and that, regardless of all the voices that may clamor for our death, and all the forces that may seek to drag us down—all the majesty of the law and all the condemnation of outraged conscience—we have an Advocate, the Son of God, whose magnanimity is the great enigma of life, and who scorns to take evil as the index of our characters, but

finds in our prayers a bond of sacred kinship and bears us, like disabled sheep, on a shepherd's shoulders, and pledges to enfold us in the House of God.

"O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us Thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, *surely trusting in Thy defense*, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RELIGION TO LONGEVITY.

"Now, therefore, hearken, O, Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you."—Deuteronomy 4:1.



HAT ye may live." We are all accustomed to connect the thoughts of religion and immortality. Faith bridges the river of death and leads on to the light. All the teachings of our religion are bound up with promises of an endless life, to which this is but preface and preparation.

But the thought of Moses in this address to the children of Israel—an address in which he repeats and amplifies the Ten Commandments—is that religion has a great deal to do with long life in this world.

Not that the rites of the Church are policies of

insurance that one shall live long. That would make them of little value as spiritual helps, and would cause men to seek them merely as the guarantee of selfish comforts and pleasures. Other reasons may be involved in the plan of God which regulates the length of many lives, so that it cannot always be that the saintliest is sure of being oldest before death comes. There are cases in which death counts for more, accomplishes more for principles and for men, than life could do. And the matter of physique and temperament will always be a factor in prophecies of long living. But relatively speaking, and in a general sense, religion has a deal to do with the length of one's days.

The matter is worth looking into, if, perchance, we may discover the Contributions of Religion to Longevity.

1, The Ten Commandments are not an exhibition of an arbitrary and selfish requirement of Jehovah, although, owing to our lack of experience, that may be the light in which they first appealed to us. It needs life and experience to clarify many of our ideas, and to discover to us the kindly motive in the mind of God leading to many of the restrictions and demands which at first appeared to us only as irksome and hampering. The wider vision of maturer years has softened the hearts of all of us toward the parents who used so often to balk our plans in childhood.

Perhaps we thought, sometimes, that the chief office of parents was to obstruct and annoy; but better knowledge of the world has led us to applaud their action, and we find ourselves pursuing the same tactics with our own.

So it is easy to see in each of these Commandments the mind of God, working out not merely the things which would please Him, but what would make the most real contribution to man's personal good and the welfare of society. Indeed, every one of them has a great deal more to do with human welfare than with the pleasure of a Divine Being.

The laws against murder and theft and uncleanness and false witness are based upon the good of society and upon the personal peril in which their commission puts the offender. These offenses excite animosities and tempt retribution. They make men cowards, and blast them with the weakness which is the curse of conscience. To avoid them is to escape a certain menace to longevity.

The question is not as to whether one may live longer than another, but as to the course of life which will be one's own best promise of lengthened days. Everybody knows that there are bad habits which undermine the very foundation of good health. The problem of longevity is very often one of avoidance or of reformation. There would be no such fads as faith-cure and so-called Christian Science, but for

the fundamental truth that the body is often strong or weak as the mind may influence it to be. Every man, then, is handicapped in the race of life who has to keep up a running fight with his own conscience. One needs a spur instead of a weight. He needs concentration of mind upon one ulterior purpose, and he can only be hindered by the goading of an outraged mentor, who clamors always for appeasement and correction. If a dog barks ever at his heels, his speed must often be lessened and a sight of the goal be lost.

Conscience so often fouls the nectar men are ready to quaff, that there is no sweetness in the potion. And when years are embittered by the ever-present accusations of an avenger whose voice is loudest in the silence and seclusion of one's quiet moments, it cannot fail to lead to premature age and shortened life.

The law of the Sabbath was not instituted because one day is better than another, or because God has more of leisure then to hear us, but because of a basic need in the constitution of every man. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." So Christ declares. Man is not to be fitted into the institution and cramped in discomfort as in a mould. He is bigger than the institution, and it is ordained for his help.

There are seven days in the week for worship and for righteous living. On no one of these days is our

obligation lessened, nor is there one day on which duty and piety need to be intensified.

Our Lord taught that there may be personal circumstances and needs which regulate our conduct on the Sabbath. The advantage of universal leisure on that day gives opportunity for congregational worship and instruction and makes it a chief day for these engagements. There have doubtless been instances of pious dissipation, in the mad rush of men and women to crowd the day with the maximum of religious exercise, which have served to defeat, in some measure, the very purpose of the Sabbath. Nightfall came upon the sweetest Sabbaths of my youth, when I had not only held my father's hand on the way to church, but at some other hour, held the same strong hand, strolling in the sunshine through unaccustomed places. These experiences rescued the day from the tedium of overwrought and morbid piety, and not only prevented a wish to strike Sunday from the calendar but gave the "Good-night" prayer an added fervor^u because it had been a sunny day.

The Creator wrought during six of the creative periods and rested on the seventh, only that He might be a Great Exemplar for the race, that toil and rest should alternate, for the good of all. The physiologist has explained for us the functions of the human body, and has shown us how the processes of waste

and repair are constantly going on. We had learned the fact before he gave us the philosophy, that sleep is a great restorer, and that worn and weary nature demands cessation of labor, recumbency, and forgetfulness, in order to repair the waste of the day and store up vitality for another. But nature demands still more; and to meet the need is the design of the Sabbath, so that one day shall be set aside for rest and recuperation, and for methods of life so different from other days as to bring rest in the changed currents of our thought.

The exhortation of our Saviour, not to neglect the advantages of religious congregation, is perfectly in line with the institution of the Sabbath, because the hours of worship are meant to give us spiritual uplift from the groveling cares of daily life, repose amid the worries of the world, and motive for the work which other days will bring. If our people ever yield to the clamor of selfish commercialism to suspend this sabbatic interruption and let the world go on as on other days, we shall have destroyed an agency which has a most vital connection with length of days.

One need not believe in any "Blue Laws" for the day, nor in any blue observance, in order to feel that we have the same right to guard it by law from the unnecessary encroachments of commerce and irreligion, that we have to guard the home, or guarantee security to life and property.

The law against covetousness surely is in the interest of longer living. There is such a thing as rational dissatisfaction with one's lot, which gives place for ambition and so leads on to greater things. But half the worry in the world is connected with a craving for the unattainable. It is the sort of worry that kills.

Again the physiologist shows us the physical effect of disturbing thoughts, and how our mental distresses can sap vitality faster than nature is able to restore the waste. When the doctor comes to cure you he does not want to be hampered by any morbid mental state. Serenity of mind is the handmaid of longevity; and it is just as important to keep our minds as to keep our hands from what does not belong to us. To covet what we cannot get is to bleach corpuscles and destroy tissue and menace health. A contented mind means longer life.

The law for parental honor is specifically quoted as having the promise "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," and it is far from being an arbitrary enactment, for it is only thus that we are to receive the benefit of experience and be advantaged by the wisdom of the ages.

There is always a net result from the life of a generation, which is worth a great deal to others who still have the course to traverse. The young people who cut loose from parental instruction, and essay to

work out the problems of life according to their own intuitions, are guilty of a folly which entails many penalties. A fitting honor to the admonitions of age is a safeguard against many perils which otherwise would come.

But the command to love God with all the powers of man's being is also a benefit to longevity. It is better than atheism, whose adherents so often pester themselves into a state of galling discomfort because somebody else cares to have a God. And it is better than idolatry, because the cults of heathenism furnish such inferior ideals and foster so vicious a type of life. The moral precepts of the Christian religion have so vital a bearing upon health and purity and exalted thought, that they cannot be minimized or subtracted without distinct loss. The children of Israel could not have substituted any of the idolatrous systems by which they were surrounded, without being overcome by customs which would have vitiated their blood and bestialized their characters, and so shortened their lives.

2 Religion makes contribution to longevity, not only by the safeguarding of its moral precepts, but also by its spiritual principles. High thoughts go with holy living. Spirituality gives motive for morality. If one is to modify his life by voluntary action, an appeal to the spiritual nature has in it more promise of prompt impulse and permanent reforma-

tion than any other. And the trio of graces which shine with more or less effulgence in religious lives—faith, hope, and charity—form a combination which means more in the lengthening of ordinary life than all else.

Charity, that sweet spirit of kindliness which never touches but to heal, nor manifests itself without enrichment! Hope, crowned with God's multicolored crescent, which sits serene amid to-day's desolation, and refuses to be poor in the presence of despoilment; which admits the darkness, but predicts the dawn; which knows no incurables nor acknowledges defeat; which turns her back against the morbid view of western skies and sits with face full toward the spot of the sunrising and croons her trustful melody and waits! Faith, that acknowledges a Divine paternity, and goes about her work as if God were present and only veiled from vision! What burdens they have eased! What lives they have lightened! Have they not often helped the doctor in the crisis, and driven death from the bed chamber? Have they not touched the eye with a new light, and tinted the cheek with a fresh bloom, and given to life a buoyancy and poise which made men wonder whence came the secret of immortal youth? Give to any human life these graces and you have solved the problem of longevity.

And you must protect it by some method, against

tempest and delirium; for life is crowded with disappointing and disheartening things. Men may grow old gracefully and in their proper time; and when they do, it is a beautiful sight, like the ripening of the leaves in some fair forest, amid the frosts and sunshine of a lengthened autumn. But other things than age have bowed the form and furrowed the face, and frosted the hair. Many a wrinkle has been the river-bed for tears. Many a bowed form has been bent by burdens.

The great question is: What will check the ravages of untimely age? Do you know any better cure than the solace and safeguard of religion? It furnishes incentive for continued striving. It protects men from being crushed by what they cannot cure. It curls the mouth up at the corners. It keeps the spirits from curdling in the thunder storm. It prevents one from giving up the conundrums of life the moment they are presented. It inspires one to do disagreeable things as if he liked it. It helps him to take his medicine without making a wry face. It restrains one from cursing fate, and prevents him from imagining that fate is cursing him. It gives him sense enough to think that the man whom he is tempted to envy may have troubles of his own. It reminds him that a clean dollar and a good night's sleep are better than a big balance and insomnia. It causes him to remember that God cares so little

for money that He makes everybody leave it behind. It holds him to square dealing, so that he can look every man in the face. It teaches him that this world is only for a little while, and something better is to come.

In short, it is the mission of religion to put us in touch with God, and enable us to be bright and happy no matter what may happen. Its precepts are to help us live; not only to live long, but to live intensely. For none have the key to life but the children of God. No others can so well meet its difficulties and be undismayed. None can view its beauties and feel such sense of possession.

No others ever scale its summit and pass down the declivity of latter years toward the soul's great crisis, with such sublime sense of exultation; with such expectancy of delight. Religion has helped them to live. It has insured them longer asylum in the world that God made.

Blood has become wine, by the power of its alchemy. The cross has lost its ugliness and has become a sign of conquest. The Nazareths and Calvarys of earth have been made sacred places. It has forced the world to yield up more of good, by the very sunshine in the soul.

And it will help them to die. By its ministry they lose all fear. The sighs and tears and farewells of others can awaken in them no desire to weep, nor

excite other wish than that, in the life supernal, they may keep vigil over those they love, as ministering angels of the Most High God. They become as smiling heroes in an awful scene, and they die—not as the brute dieth, nor as the vanquished fall—but enraptured by a Divine philosophy, and leaving the world as kings, with music and friendly convoy, pass on to their coronation.

GOD'S PITY LIKE A FATHER'S

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."—Psalm 103:13.



HERE is a great deal of theology in the world; so much, indeed, that one could not possibly preach it all at once. With the physician, too great variety in the components of prescription may indicate an uncertainty in diagnosis, and a hope that some one of them may meet a malady which he cannot define.

The doctor finds frequent evidence that special cases require special treatment, because of temperamental idiosyncracies or some possibility of complications. He will tell you also that special seasons bring similar complaints, and that with great change in climatic conditions his first case will often be an indication of what his particular work will be throughout the day.

The gospel is a medicine, and the preacher is

practitioner. In these days, he will need to take account of personal idiosyncracies, as often as the physician, and he may choose a special line of treatment in his effort to satisfy the needs of individuals, without reasonable suspicion of having forgotten that there are many other things which might be said. He is apt to discover, also, that the case or two for which he seeks some special treatment are but specimens of maladies, to which this treatment will apply as he mingles with men.

Among the multitude of men and women who have attended these Open Air Services we have found many whose mental and spiritual difficulties are evidently not to be reached by any ordinary or customary process. They have been confused by their reading and disturbed by dogmas. Some of us have been profoundly moved by the belief that a great many of them belong in the Church, and that they would become mighty forces for good in the work the Church has set herself to do, if only they may be helped to the discovery of essential truth, and the harmony between their own worthy impulses and aspirations and the mind of God.

If we seem often to recur to the same line of treatment, it is because there is ever a recurring need, in the presence here of men and women whose souls are instinct with desire to be brought into touch with God—a God whom their hearts can recognize, and

whom, in their earnest desire for spiritual satisfaction, they may follow with childlike confidence, and with certainty that in being true to the best impulses of their own natures, they are not false to Him.

If we do not speak often, here, of the Atonement and the Incarnation, it is not because of any lack of appreciation of the sublime value of the martyrdom of Jesus to the principle of expiation, or of the stupendous significance of the presence of the Son of God in the form of a man in our world, and His effort to bridge the vast gulf between sin and salvation with the sign of the cross. It is rather because the Incarnation and the Atonement are but the marks and proofs of an infinite love which thrilled the heart of God before they became words in human vocabularies, and of which they are only expressions. They are not even the sequel to love, for love began when man began, and it has throbbed with every human heart-beat down the centuries, and will go on and on as long as God and man have anything in common.

THE DIVINE PATERNITY.

To-day we bring to you again a message of the Divine Paternity, and an inspired warrant for seeking an interpretation of God in the best human impulse. What is God like? The Psalmist says: "Like as a Father." Jesus says: "Our Father."

But, the trouble is, that we so often allow our

thought of the Majesty of a Creator and the rigidity of a Monarch to eclipse all views of Fatherhood, and we present the unnatural spectacle of shivering in fear before the warmth of Infinite Love. To be the subjects of a king is very different from being children of the king. Do you suppose that the halls of regal palaces are unused to the sound of the laughter and the song of children? Have you fancied that the child of a king must always ask for audience and must approach the august presence with the same ceremony as strangers? No king is fit to be a father, and his palace is no home, if his children are overawed by his regality, and there is no place for filial confidences and the natural life of a child. What folly to imagine that no king ever cradles his child in his arms, or watches the unfolding of its mind with pride, or looks upon its sports and pleasures with interest and joy! The king's subject and the king's son would paint very different pictures of His Majesty. But have not many of the children of God stopped to look at the picture the subject has painted, and so beclouded their hearts with the fear of aliens, when they ought to have leaped along life's highway with gladness and song at thought of all that fatherhood involves?

But sin, ah yes! That is the factor that confuses the mind. Every man knows that he is a sinner, and that there is an infinite distance between sin and the

character of God. But there have been some sweet voices that have spoken to the world about the forgiveness of sin. Whence came that thought? Where did the principle of forgiveness have its birth? Surely the laws of nature do not suggest by analogy that any violation of the right can be overlooked. A knotted thread makes a flaw in the fabric. Disregard of seed-time means failure in harvest. Abuse of the body involves ill-health and suffering. Upon every human body, upon every tree, upon everything that lives, is stamped in plain letters this stern truth, that natural law cannot be disregarded without incurring a penalty that shows itself in deformity, in ugliness, in imperfection, in disease or decrepitude. So strong is this impression upon the minds of pagans that they apply it to every violation of law, natural or moral, and they affirm the inevitable punishment of sin and that the idea of forgiveness can never be entertained.

Look, then, at the teachings of the purest morality. Its highest aim is met in giving aid to the helpless and in keeping one's self unspotted from the world. But personified morality wields imperious scepter over human conduct. She builds her prisons and turns the key upon those who fail to do things decently. Pleas of guilt, appeals for mercy, and resolutions of reform do not move her heart to pity and to pardon; for the story is an old one and it meets no patient hearing. No goddess is so proof

against tender-heartedness. She knows no forgiveness. She treats all men as strong and acknowledges none to be "weak in the flesh." When the penitent bends before her throne with the plea: "When I would do good, evil is present with me"; her voice is full of icy righteousness, and she demands, "Overcome the evil." She talks of recompense: "An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a life for a life." Free and unmerited forgiveness is unknown in the sphere of her dominion.

Only as the clouds are cleft to show the face of Infinite Love, is the revelation made that the penitent sinner may be forgiven and permitted to begin again. That is true of forgiveness in its broadest sense. And yet the ethics of kinship demands the impulse of love. And it is the nature of love to overlook and condone and forgive. We cannot explain it, but surely it is universal. How many homes would last without it? How many households would hold together until the children have been reared, but for the generosity of love, which will not regard dereliction as a sign of character, and which crowns all chastisement with the kiss of peace? Few of us are without our memories of transgressions blotted out by parental magnanimity. We do not need to argue such a point as this, because we know that our growth toward the better ideals of manhood and womanhood has been marked by many fresh beginnings, in which we have been

helped by a sweet pity and compassion which was so willing to treat us like children and was so optimistic as to hope for our gradual development toward a better life.

But the point is as to the interpretation which this compassionate treatment of our offending is to furnish us concerning the character of God.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

A realization of the majesty and the greatness of God would seem to make it improper for us to say that He is in any sense like us, but our Lord Himself adopted this principle of comparison, for the purpose of illustration, when He said: "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Every virtue we possess is but a faint sign of the fulness and perfection of that same virtue in the character of God. That you have love for your child is no sign that it is wrong, or a thing to call for shame. It is right, and you would have cause to be ashamed if you did not have it, and if it did not prompt you to a compassionate view of the weaknesses of your child and a willingness to be merciful. It is a thing inseparable from your nature. It is involved in the idea of fatherhood. But the trend of the Scripture is to teach us that paternal love is the same in essence,

whether it be human or Divine; the difference is only one of intensity and capacity.

What a happy consummation it would be if we could get the mass of frightened Christians—who so often blind their eyes with righteous tears that they cannot see God, and who are half afraid to do anything but pray, for fear it may be wrong—to see that the natural impulses of human love can never eclipse the fulness of Divine compassion! Our praises before our Father God, when we join in the great song of redemption, will be intensified by the reflection that we have failed to do Him justice while on earth.

We all are guilty of this undervaluation of a sublime paternity; we who pray and mourn and who try to do good because we love it and not because we imagine that God can care for it; we who suppose that heaven depends upon some peculiar mental or emotional state, or upon strict answers to the catechism; we who try to hope for salvation, but who fear that we shall have a hard time in meeting the tests of celestial citizenship; we fail to do Him justice, as to the fulness of His love. And the others who have permitted God to be veiled by the unintelligible claims of a mystical religion so that they have not trusted Him enough to try His mercy; surely they have discounted at an awful rate the Fatherhood which lasted from Eden to Calvary, and

which knew no measure but in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ.

Standing beside an open grave in Arlington, the other day, was a sister whose brother's burial had just been accomplished, and who wished, although she did not say it in these words, that he could have been left to her mercy and love, rather than to be committed to the care of God. She had been cultured in a narrower theology, and felt that because he had had no definite emotional experience, there was no ground to hope for his salvation. Her love was so great that she would have saved him or would have died for him. But she could not trust him to God or to the Son of God, whose blessed cross is perpetual proof of a love great enough to die for others. She deserved our deepest pity, as do all who minimize the grace of God. She was a mother, but she could not help thinking that a mother is better than a God. She did not say it so, but that is the logical conclusion from her fear and doubt.

She claimed that one must be "born again" (which as few will deny as will be able to explain); and that if one is saved he must have the evidence of it (which doubtless will be the case, sooner or later, in one's experience). But most people have been born a long time before they knew it, or could comprehend very much about the philosophy of being. If we are going to use physical terms in illustration

of spiritual experiences, why not use physical analogies also?

Do you not know that it would require a spiritual prodigy to realize the mystery of the new birth in a moment? Many people are not of an emotional type, and the consciousness of spiritual being comes by the slow process of spiritual development.

“When passing southward, I may cross the line
Between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans,
I may not know, by any test of mine,
By any startling signs or strange commotions
Across my track.

“But if the days grow sweeter, one by one,
And e’en the icebergs melt their hardened faces,
And sailors linger, basking in the sun,
I know I must have made the change of places,
Some distance back.

“When, answering timidly the Master’s call,
I passed the bourne of life in coming to Him,
When in my love for Him I gave up all;
The very moment when I thought I knew Him,
I cannot tell.

“But, as unceasingly I feel His love;
As this cold heart is melted to o’erflowing,
As now so clear the light comes from above,
I wonder at the change, and pass on, knowing
That all is well.”

One need have no doubt that that man is a Christian who lifts up his soul to God in the act of contrition, and who goes on from day to day, making fresh beginnings, and trying to do his duty as God would

have him; who does not wait for proofs of his birth into God's Kingdom, but tries sincerely to do the right thing.

If all men are to be measured by the same mental state, it is unfortunate that types of mind are so very diverse. If all must develop the same emotional experience, religion can only be adapted to certain temperaments. Fatherhood takes note of temperamental differences, and demands no impossible experience. Most men need to be converted very often. They need to be turned away from wrong every time they do wrong. There used to be a good many discussions in the days of our childhood, as to when St. Peter really became a Christian; whether it was during Christ's life, while the Apostle was constantly with Him, or on the day of Pentecost, when St. Peter became bold in his preaching. If a man is never born until he knows it, and if he is never to be accounted a Christian till he is in the rhapsody and comfort of a definite, conscious faith, some of us are very much mistaken as to the facts and possibilities of spiritual life.

Let us get back to first principles. It would be no revelation if God should use words concerning Himself which have a different meaning among men. The language of revelation must be a common language—it must represent identical things on either side of the border-land between earth and heaven.

Love is one of these universal words. For God to love, involves the same impulse as when fathers love their children. To be a Father on the part of God cannot possibly involve all manner of unlikeness to what that relation means among men.

The conclusion is that God's Word means exactly what it says, and it becomes more of a revelation to us, as its expressions and relations are interpreted to us by the relations we ourselves enjoy and the impulses of which we are conscious.

The text of the Psalmist is designed to translate God's Fatherhood into terms of human intelligence. To know a father's pity is to know something of the heart of God. Like means like. "Like as a father," is a key to the whole problem of forgiveness and restoration, and there are no worthy fathers or mothers in all this world who cannot see God's pity in the mirror of their own emotions. To them, at least, God has given a fifth gospel, and as they turn its pages, in their own hearts, they ought to know better than anybody else, whether God is good and gentle, long-suffering and thoughtful, and of loyalty that lasts to the end, because His compassion is like a father's.

THE PERMANENCE OF GOD AND OF LIFE.

"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?"

And God said unto Moses, I am that I am; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.

And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."—Exodus 3:13-15.



It would often be a good thing if we could realize more perfectly that it is a matter of some importance to the Divine Being in what terms He is presented to men. Moses was a man well past his eighty years, but he did not know it all. He came to God with the simple faith of a child, and asked for explicit orders for his mission.

There were names for God—terms of revelation—

which were common enough. He might coin his words in familiar moulds and speak just as men expected him to speak. And, by the way, men have been burned at the stake, since then, for doing otherwise. There are very few stakes left in modern times, and the number of those who are in the mood to make use of them is growing smaller all the time. But the old love for the parrot still lives in certain quarters, and admiration for his unvarying loyalty to the things he heard some other say, rather than for the mocking-bird, whose ear gathers up all the sounds of a universe and whose throat interprets them in a new song at times. There is still a deathly fear in some places of an expression which is not cast in familiar forms, so that the preacher may go right on, while the congregation sleeps, in perfect confidence that he will say just the usual thing.

The Church that is afraid of anything is not built for the confidence or the conquest of mankind. The Church that forbids its members to read or to think is not contributing to civilization the sort of characters who have power to breast the thought of the world and to stand like giants as the rallying point for all that is good and true. It is a great comfort to be in a Church where one dares to think. And it seems like a reasonable deference to pay to the Divine Being, to concede, as Moses did, that He may have some choice of words, some preference for expressions

in which He and His thoughts are to receive translation into the language of men. That is a good point to remember, that it may be a matter of concern to Him, in what way we assume to teach men of Him.

In this instance old terms were discarded, not because they were not valuable, but for the evident reason that some new terms were needed to give a larger and completer thought. They had already terms enough for the greatness of God—for His power to create and to govern—even for His loyalty to covenant and promise. But a new day was dawning for Israel—the day of Exodus—the era of national development—in which each man was to have a part unknown before. National expansion always involves new views, new terms, fresh adjustments, and changed ideals. And as Israel faced a new life, there was given a new view of God and new terms were chosen for its definition.

THE PERMANENCE OF GOD.

In this larger view, there is a thought, First, of the Permanence of God. We have often heard an expression concerning the "Great I Am," as if, in popular esteem, it involved only the thought of self-sufficiency; that God is complete, in Himself, having no real need of others to augment His pleasure or to complete His world; that He rules alone, abso-

lute Master and Dictator of everything, and in no way bound to listen to any earthly voice or make change in the operation of ordinary laws or sequences. ~~Perhaps in some absolute sense He may be all of that.~~ But that is not the idea He was giving to Moses. It is all that some men claim to see in Him, and so they ignore Him and live alone.

The creation of the world—how it is accounted for? Was it the result of an experimental fancy, to occupy moments of idleness and tedium, with no more plan or purpose or hopeful intention than that of the carver who whittles a stick to while away the time and who makes something, not because he wants to, but because the fancy leads him? Granting the fact of deliberate intention, leading up to creation—the only theory that furnishes adequate excuse for the world and for life—it follows that it was caused by a sense of incompleteness or of benevolence, which means merely that God could not be happy without.

The deification of natural law, as if it were a soulless God, and the exclusion of prayer and providence, denies to the creative power as much interest as men display in the machines which their hands construct or works of art which they create. He stopped a moment when the world was finished, to enjoy what He had done. And if, as some men say, He went away and left it, He came back again so many times as to show an abiding interest in it, and

to emphasize His desire to be its God and to have a share in the personal life of its people.

Here were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had been a God to them. Their characters were probably as various as their features. None of them were perfect. Each had his own personal equation to which the Divine Being adapted Himself. Each of them needed God, and each, no doubt, in a different way. His infinite spirit of adaptability had made Him a personal God to each of them. Every father knows what it means to take account of the personal peculiarities of his children and to be a father to each of them, and yet always in some different way. The emotional and the phlegmatic, the imaginative and the prosaic, each need direction and influence suited to the personal problems which the temperament suggests, and the parental endeavor is to help each to be what it ought.

Perhaps in this family evolution each child gets view of some new phase of parental character, and so a father becomes the personal and exclusive possession of each of his children, being father to one as he is not to another, and yet realizing the possibility of his sacred relation to each. ~~In this way~~ God had come to each of the old Hebrew worthies, being to each of them what He was not to the others, and yet being the complete answer to the needs and aspirations of all. And it was in just this sense that He

wanted to come into touch with the individual lives of His people through all succeeding time.)

Along with the spirit of adaptability which would make Him of value to each life, regardless of its eccentricities, was to go the thought of permanency. He lives perpetually in the present tense. "I am," is His name. We live, so often, in other tenses. Some of us in the past, perhaps, when life was serener and we had other difficulties to combat; a past for which we long, because it was easier and more triumphant. Or, perhaps, we are living in the future, and feeling that all the blessedness of God's presence will be given to us then. This is the view that so many of us get, of a God who is to be ours by and by, when we shall have struggled through the world by dint of hard endeavor and have saved our souls—that the vision of God will be ours when heaven begins. But the personal presence, personal coöperation, personal blessing, is to be ours all through the years.

The wise man has, as his chief tense, the present. He does the duty of the moment—does it as if it were the crowning obligation of a lifetime. And being wise, he will remember that what he does to-day will illumine his past and strengthen his future. There is atonement in it, because it redeems a bad name and brings that charity of judgment which comes with the knowledge that one is doing better. And there is assurance in it, because we know that we can

do, to-morrow, what we have done to-day, and we make each victory the stepping-stone to another.

Let us jot this thought down, of the permanence of God, His desire to be to us and to all the race throughout all generations—all of us and always—what He was to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Each life has its own sins to be overcome, each its own trials to be endured, but the grace of God that has been so personal and satisfying endures from generation to generation, and the great Jehovah who comes to man as the answer to the appeal of personal need is still the “I am,” the ever-present, ever-living, permanent God of Israel’s time, “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

THE PERMANENCE OF LIFE.

II. But there is a thought here, also, as to the permanence of life. Our Saviour quoted this text and gave such emphasis to His interpretation that St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke have noted it. St. Matthew quotes Him as saying: “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you, by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Christ emphasizes the eternal presence, and means us to note the tense. There is no statement which suggests that the personal relation of God to

these worthies was merely a matter of history—that it is entirely a thing of the past. Every past moment was once present, and so the statement of this perpetual presence reaches back into the past. But every future moment will at some time be present, and the eternal presence reaches forward through all coming time.

Choosing to say, "I am the God of Abraham" rather than "I was," the sentence is rescued from a mere religious reminiscence and turned into a declaration of immortality. It means that Abraham still lives; that the other worthies live; that death is translation into other forms, transition to other scenes, and though it involves eclipse of vision and bitter sorrow to one's friends, life has permanence, and it stretches on and on throughout the years. When it is said, then, that one is "gathered unto his fathers," it means more than that the mortal form finds rest with others in beds beneath the grass and flowers. It means company with others gone before, in active, conscious life.

So many good people have had their doubts on this score, that death seems a more awful thing than it ought. Life seems to them more like a meteor that burns brightly for a little while and gives promise of some greater glory and then loses lustre and falls away from its place forever. Thoughts are immortal. Why should the minds that think them be

less? No mind the earth has ever known has reached the limit of its development and power. Does education count for naught, and is it the everlasting curse of aspiration that, when a man really becomes fitted to live and to learn, the prize is snatched from his gaze and he is stricken down as one who is punished for his daring?

We can do little more than suggest the thought, to-day, but the fact of immortality is one upon which our Lord sets the stamp of truth. A death which means cessation of mental activity and lapse of personality outrages one's sense of reason. God is *the God of the living*, and identity is as real, beyond the view of this world, as when the friends we have loved—yes, that we still love—were among us.

There are sounds too subtle for mortal ears, and sights too celestial; our limitations bind us to a life of faith; but God is permanent and life is permanent. Only earth is evanescent. And when the scales fall and vision is unobstructed, we shall see Him, we shall see those whose love is warp and woof of our own life, and we shall maintain for all time the personality which has set us apart from all others upon the earth. The loss of any joy is only for a time. Unto His mercy we have committed the souls of our loved ones who are lost to us *only for a little while*. Heaven depends not upon our absorption into deity, or the anæsthesia of an endless sleep, but

upon a life in which identity is assured, in which memory is active, and in which the dreams and lapses and losses and loves of the earth are linked with the realizations and triumphs and gains and recognitions of our larger life.

Death may touch the body, but the soul goes on—the same soul, but purified, and rejoicing ever in the continuity of all love by which it has once been transformed and enriched. God is forever, and the soul abides. A new name may be written in our foreheads, but no memory or fellowship can be denied save the thing that defileth.

Life is more than being—even brutes have that. It is more than mind, and intellectuality does not define its heaven. Affection, experience, memory—these must be added to being or there is no real life. And God robs no man of the friends by love of whom the soul has caught an inspiration and a joy that made the earth worth while. Physical dissolution carries away the debris of all that is sensual, but all that is spiritual and pure is property of the soul and must share its immortality.

GOD IN THE LIFE AND LABOR OF A CHRISTIAN.

*"For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen."*—St. Matthew 6:13.



It is ever the great defect in the character of an enthusiast, to feel that he is responsible for God. Necessary as may be an effervescence of enthusiasm on the part of one who would rouse others to noble action, emotions mark themselves by contrasts; and, as in the landscape, every mountain must have its lowland near, or its valley, if it be a mountain; so the emotions seem to be governed in their sequence by the same law of contrast. And the man, to-day buoyed up by some mighty hope and seeking to move others by the same impulses which govern his own undertaking, is very apt to have his hours of deep depression—depression which is all the deeper for its contrast with the height of his former hopes. It is so

because the enthusiast has outstripped his brothers in the mastery of an idea. While he has pondered, the fire has burned, and the ardor of his own passion for the coveted reform is naturally far beyond that of men to whom the idea has been presented for the first time. Having thought the whole thing out, the leader comes to his fellows with plans formed and action determined, and expects them to be as enthusiastic as himself, or, at least, ready to resolve according to his own resolution, only to find himself, as a rule, disappointed; his theories discounted, and his reforms postponed.

Phlegmatic men are not captured by enthusiasms. It is your nervous temperament which soon becomes glowing and confident under the influence of an idea. But as the metal which comes earliest to whiteness when you put it in a flame, cools and dulls most quickly when the flame is gone and it must sustain itself upon its own inner heat, so the nervous character become depressed by inaction and unresponsiveness. It is hard to wait for another day. It is hard to give men time to think until their thinking brings them into sympathy with the proposition. There may be a slight exaggeration—though there is ground for the suspicion—in saying that these hours of disappointment and depression lead a man almost to think that he is responsible for God; that God's Kingdom depends upon his endeavors.

Our Lord was too true and deep a philosopher not to detect this tendency in human nature; and realizing that all reforms must work themselves out by the leaven of their own virtue and by educational processes that are tedious and slow, He sought to fortify the characters of His chosen propagandists against the rashness of that wild enthusiasm that would drag depression in its trail. They were not to be responsible for God. They were not to depend upon themselves. God was to be responsible for them and for the results of their faithful doing.

The goodness of every idea is the thought of God reflected in it. And while the idea must have its propagandists, just as the seed must have its sower, the germinal power must be depended upon for the beginning of its mastery. If we are interested in any work of value for this or future generations, it is apt to be the case that our depression and disheartenment result from divorcing ourselves and our work from God. If the gospel we are preaching is His Gospel, there is life and power in it, and it cannot fail to accomplish what He has willed. We can add nothing to it. He may give us such insight that we may help to discover its beauty to another; but it is only discovery which may be our mission, not creation. The beauty when men see it, is only the beauty of God's thought.

Because mankind is created in the image of God,

the race is bound, in the long run, to be brought into sympathy with God's thoughts and to recognize the God that is in them. You have, sometimes, in a work of fiction, traced the characters along through many adventurous episodes till certain of them are brought together in closest bonds of affection and are shown to be of one blood—it may chance, brother and sister. And yet the revelation is only the sequence of what was being foreshadowed in the earlier pages, in the sympathy of ideas, the similarity of tastes, and signs of a common parentage. And so it may be with the sons of God, who for awhile have lost trace of their Divine birthright, and are wandering, unsatisfied, through the mazes of this present world. There is in them much of good—a good that is of God—and as the years go on, the thoughts and the ways of God will more and more attract them; not always, perhaps, through any organized ecclesiastical system, but goodness because it is goodness, apart from all cant and religious professionalism, and thus, through the sympathy of ideas, the grand denouement of the story will be brought to pass, in the revelation that there is kinship, and they are sons of God. The power that will bring men into this consciousness of sonship is not that which is measured by your persuasiveness, or mine. It will be through goodness striking a responsive chord in human hearts: the power is of God.

It is important that we should never lose sight of the linking of human hearts to God, which was the grand ideal of our Saviour. Every petition which He taught men to lisp is built upon this basic principle, that His "is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever." Upon no other theory could we pray with the urgency that Christ desires. We pray because we are His; the kingdom is His; the work is His; and the glory of achievement and of a united and redeemed humanity is to be laid as a tribute at His feet.

Things go wrong, we think. Demonism is not dead. Humanity is not yet perfected. So many things are as we do not want them. If we are striving nobly the responsibility is not ours. And it may be that if we had keener vision and might apply the tests of heaven to the affairs of earth, we should note larger progress from day to day than we have ever dreamed.

On a last journey to Manila, we had the good fortune to pass through that wonderful country of which Joaquin Miller had said: "Colorado, rare Colorado! Yonder she rests; her head of gold pillowed on the Rocky Mountains, her feet in the brown grass; the boundless plains for a playground; she is set on a hill before the world, and the air is very clear, so that all may see her well." And, indeed, as one follows the iron horse from the pasture to the

clouds, one's soul is lifted up and given a glimpse of Nature's God. The soul breathes freer, and the eye, through the medium of a rarer atmosphere, makes light of distances. One sees, and feels, and knows. He feels, afterward, that, like Moses, he has come down from the mountain, where he has had his talk with God.

As we sped on from curve to curve along that spiral pathway to the clouds, we constantly wondered at the daring which ever attempted the task of pushing railways through these narrow gorges, where the vaulting walls, as they stretched toward heaven, were so close at times that there was no room for the little river and the road-bed side by side, and a pendant bridge must be hung from the mountain to support the train.

And yet, in all the wildness of that wonderful day, there was no gorge so deep and abysmal but that God's firmament brooded over it; no spot so forlorn and desolate, even when nightfall shut us in, but some star rayed its light thereon and flashed to us its message that "God's in His heaven; all's right with the world." One can scarcely be rushed along through these walls of rocks that have been racked by earth's inner turbulence and riven by its outer storms, without thinking of possible derailment in case some boulder may have fallen on the track. But fears are quieted by the reflection that no train

goes out without a guard in advance of it, to inspect every foot of track and so to prevent disaster. And one is reminded of the assurance of God's word that "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them."

A little dog rushed out to bark at us his malediction, and followed after us at the limit of his speed; but at last, tired and triumphed over, he was left in the distance and swallowed up in the tunnel of the world's quickly forgotten things.

Above him stood the mountains, their majestic altitude seeming to increase as we moved away from them. The little things were gone. The mean things sped away. Only the big things of God's domain remained. The great things grew. The small things shrivelled. There was with us a vision as of a movement upon two planes of action. The lower world moved away very rapidly, but the mountains, in their majesty, seemed to be coming with us and growing larger all the time.

To the enthusiast, and to all who hope for the triumph of good in God's world, this is not to be as an optical illusion. In a very real sense, all this will be achieved. More and more, the trivialities and annoyances of life are to be done away and forgotten; and more and more, the thought is to grow, that this is God's world; that mankind will be freshened up in the likeness of His image; that His Kingdom will

come; that His will shall be done, and in the doing of it men will find a rare and sweet content.

Do not, my brother, try to be an Atlas, bearing upon your own shoulders, however broad and brawny they may be, the whole burden of the world. To do that will breed pessimism in your soul, and the infection of your sombre presence and your melancholy sighs will bring chill and shadow to those about you. The dear Lord, whose scarred hands have given us a setting apart for service, once talked to men of another Shepherd whose shoulders are the natural resting place for the disabled and weak among the flock.

Solitariness has no place in God's thought for any part of His creation; and everywhere—on topmost peak and sheltered nook, on land and sea, in equatorial clime and frigid realm—the sunshine is sent on its mission to chase away the shadows, and wrap the world in the glad colors of the day. Do not let your lack of vision tempt you to think there is lack of God. Do you ever look above you in the nighttime and think of those worlds, touched by our lost sunshine, which seem to be whirling in space—each of them apparently a law unto itself—and yet that each of them is chained to its own orbit? We are no more lost in space than they. There is a Center to this social constellation of which we are a part, and while we may think ourselves to be moving, each in his own way, we are still within touch of God.

Comfort yourself with this thought and it will lighten your heart and strengthen your hands. It will make more real your comprehension of the possibility of working together with God. You are not God, but you are God's child, and with a model Father there is no forgotten offspring.

But we are so small, and our undertakings are so paltry! Atoms, after all, are we! Ah, yes, but the affinities of matter link the atom to the molecule and the mass. And neither nature nor yet art ever knew a straighter line than that which leads from the outmost edge of the remotest atom to the very heart of the mass toward which every atom feels itself bound. If the faith of Jesus has put you into right adjustment with the Great Heart toward which everything of good must gravitate, that which touches you has touched God, and that of good which goes forth from you is God's own virtue.

Some day—would God it were to-day—we shall have such a grasp of the subtle forces of the spiritual world, that we may realize how the mastery of the Great Mind has governed the labors of the disciples, and given the blessing of success to their doings in His Name.

We believe this, O Lord, because "Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

THE CONDITION OF PERFECTION.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."—St. Matthew 19:21.



PERHAPS every preacher has had a similar experience to that which might be confessed to you to-day, that an old sermon has gone into the waste-basket, because it has been outgrown, and the experiences of life have led to a larger interpretation; view-points have changed; the Bible has become a new Book; and religion seems a bigger thing, humaner and more rational. To one reared amid the barriers of a narrower faith, it is but natural that with broadened vision the image of God in one's inmost soul should have less and less in common with the gods of paganism; that the love of the All-Father should bound itself by a more vast immensity; and that, though there are infinite vistas which the mind must still

traverse in order to comprehend the majesty of His Being, the new view-point from which one tries to study the thrilling problems of the soul, should assure a deeper satisfaction to every spiritual instinct, and induce the wonder how people can seem to get from the Bible so much that its Author never meant.

It pays to be an optimist; to remember one's God as "the God of hope." The altar should suit us best when it is in the East. We ought to love the rising better than the setting sun. Our cross ought not to hold a figure of the passion; it must be the cross of Easter; it must be stripped, that it may proclaim by its very nakedness, the love which triumphed in its travail. This earth is God's handiwork. Our fellow-men are God's children. Our theology must hold to the Atonement, because the cross is there as the symbol of expiation, but it should have large place for the Incarnation also, and it bids one put these great facts in their proper perspective, and remind one's hearers that thirty-three years cover the period of Incarnation and three days the Atonement; that three days were consumed in that awful crisis in the life of Jesus which, in a manner polemics will never help us to realize, had to do with the great mystery as to how God can be just and the justifier of them that appeal to Him; while all the years of that blessed ministry were given to an interpretation and an illustration of God.

The thing one cannot help seeing, more and more, is that, so far as we are able to comprehend His ministry and purpose, that aspect of it is most practical, though there are others to be considered, which brings Him here to show what God is like; to rescue the Divine Fatherhood from the caricatures of the Rabbis and from the warped judgment of sectarians, and give the world, in His own actions and impulses, a vision of the true God. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

It is difficult to look upon this young man of our text as so many have done. It is hard to believe that he was a proud, self-righteous man who had come to our Lord to exhibit his virtues and to glorify himself in a Pharisaic way; nor does he seem like a man condemned and guilty of a rejection of Christ. He seems, rather, like a person of real religious instincts, but who was not satisfied with himself. He had been living up to his light, and, unlike the Pharisees, he was looking for more. He was conscientious and sincere in his endeavor to keep the commandments. He kept himself pure. Unlike many another who has prided himself upon a correct theology, he refrained from injury to his kind. So far as rival schools of theology permitted him to know the law of God, he tried to keep it. No doubt he measured up to a spiritual stature far above the men of his time.

Perhaps there were few who could teach him, for the instructors of his age so needed tuition themselves.

He has been condemned in some pulpits because he came asking what he should do to "inherit" eternal life; as if he might by his own action acquire a right to God's favor. And this has been dwelt upon to illustrate his self-righteous and unworthy spirit. But to show that this is absolutely groundless and wrong, we have only to note that our Lord uses the very same word in His talk with the disciples concerning the incident, when He says: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

We do not find self-righteousness in him, but rather a desire to be at his best. He was not proclaiming his virtues upon the housetop, but was talking quietly with Jesus, and surely in that presence he could be frank and free. He has heard of this new Teacher whose name begins to be spoken, in blessing, by so many lips, and he hails with gratitude this possibility of gaining some new lesson in godliness. St. Luke tells us that he was a "ruler," and St. Mark adds that he came "running and kneeled to" our Lord. No requirement, even of Oriental courtesy, made obeisance necessary upon his part, but his action rather indicates the profoundness of his re-

spect and reverence for the sacred office of the Teacher. If his action had been like the kiss of Judas or the tinsel trappings of a simulated godliness, our Lord would have detected it and would have applied the scourge to his deception. But He takes the young man in such sober earnest that we may well give an honest appraisal to his claim that he is trying hard to be good.

In reply to a suggestion he asserts his compliance with the commandments. A scrupulous observance of them has become the habit of his life. He must have had a good mother and father, and the lessons of his youth had become the law of his life. And just here St. Mark adds that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him," and so makes indisputable our claim that there was good in him and that he was honest.

Ah, it requires a straightforward and an honest life to meet the light of that inspection, and to win such tribute! The light was on his face; the eyes of Jesus looked into his, and deeper still, into his soul, and he met the gaze, as we see him, unflinchingly and with the simplicity of a child. And the Great Master, who best knew men, loved him, for the sincerity of his purpose and the earnestness of his endeavor. No doubt many another man, in his blind and earnest pursuit of an ideal, but too much dissatisfied with himself to give himself a name and his faith a definition, has been the object of the same Divine apprecia-

tion and love and even of desire to lead him to more perfect spiritual attainments. This man does not claim to have realized the ideal. He knows that there is a difference between the earnest striving of his life and the virtues of the Teacher. He kneels to Jesus as to his Superior in the better way. He knows that this Being has a message for him. He knows, in his own soul, that the goodness he has thus far striven to attain is real goodness, and not to be ashamed of. But just as all who journey find the world expanding and the horizon always just a little farther on, so he is conscious that, though he has striven and has attained, there are virtues beyond him, and in his desire to be more, he begs counsel of the Nazarene: "What lack I yet?"

Oh, how the answer has been perverted and misapplied, and men have been made to worry over it as an almost impossible condition of salvation! Condition of salvation? Why, it is nothing of the sort. "Jesus said unto him, *If thou wilt be perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." We have no warrant to impose that condition upon the man who seeks the mercy of God. It is not a condition of salvation. The man is all right as far as he has gone. There is no possibility of mistaking the meaning of the word: "If thou wilt be perfect"—complete, ended, finished.

But you tell us that the man rejected the condition and was lost. We do not believe it. "He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." That may be admitted. But that is not strange. We should have gone away sorrowful, too. It is plain that we should, because we make a wry face at the appearance of the alms-basin and we give sometimes, just because somebody happens to be looking at us. At least we give more when somebody sees us than if left alone. And we often wish the missionaries would stay at home and leave the heathen to themselves, so that we might not have our devotions materialized on Sundays, and we might have just pure sweet gospel, without the disturbing sound of money in the sanctuary. If the vow of poverty were a condition of pardon, we should not have enough communicants to furnish vestrymen, and there might even be a vacant pulpit here and there. That is a sacrifice not often demanded, and the best that most men can do is to retain control of their holdings and use them generously and carefully.

Yes, this man went away. Unless he was a religious enthusiast, he would need to go away and think it all over. We are not told that he never came back. Nicodemus went away, also, and he does not figure but once again in the gospel narrative, till the crisis, when men are needed, and Peter and some of the others seem to lack the martyr spirit, and then

Nicodemus, who could not grasp the dogma that so many moderns preach to the unconverted, is driven to the cross by the impulse of love.

That man is little known in history who would not be sad at such a saying, as that he should part with his bank-account, his home, his treasures of art on walls and pedestals, and his protection against the helplessness of age and invalidism. The gospels give, in far too fragmentary form, the record of our Lord's life and the lives which He inspired, for us to base any theory upon the silence of the Scriptures concerning this man's return. There can be little doubt that he came back, because the root of the matter was surely in him.

But the point is that the incident does not impose the vow of poverty as a condition of salvation. The words of Jesus are rather a call to altruism, theism that binds the heart to others and makes the needs of others personal and paramount. The altruistic life is the ideal life for the Christian, because it is the nearest approach to the life of Christ. It is the spirit of absolute unselfishness, which translates need and obligation into common terms of action. And the man who is seeking the highest perfection of character must approach the ideal which finds its realization in the life of Jesus—a life of

utter surrender to the needs of men. This is true, because such a life not only blesses the needy and imitates the action of our Lord, but also has an evolutionary power in the development of personal godliness.

The man who does something for others does something for himself. If he is freezing and obeys an impulse to keep another man from freezing, the warmth which he generates reacts upon himself. Exercise is not only expenditure but accretion. As the pendulum swings out only to travel back on the same arc, so the force which goes out in exercise comes back in the form of strengthened fiber. So is it also in the realm of intellect and the domain of soul. Expenditure is followed by enrichment. One gives out the treasures of his mind, only to find that clearer perception and more facile diction are the result of his effort, and he can do better the second time because he has been aided by his first attempt. The soul grows by virtue of every effort to do good. And altruism means not only the blessing of mankind but also the evolution of character.] Our Lord was a philosopher in laying down the principle of utter abnegation and sacrifice as a condition of perfection.

But this incident may have a very practical value to many men who have no clear views as to theology or as to the philosophy of religious emotion and life. They may at least come with as much of faith as this

young man, and recognize the superiority of Jesus and the helpfulness that results from contact with Him. They may come with the feeling that they are trying to do the best they can, as they mingle with men; to be pure and clean and honest and harmless, in all that they do. These things never bring a blush to their own cheeks, why should they put a frown upon the face of God? If the simple recital of efforts to be good and to do good could stir the heart of Jesus when He stood face to face with this young man, can He have less appreciation of your efforts to be true?

Not all men have the same experience. And if you have been kept away from Christ thus far by the difficulties of definition, leave these things alone until you have walked together for a while, the Master and you—busied with the same tasks, planning the same cures, lifting up the same bowed hearts, and leading the same unselfish lives—and the atmosphere will surely be cleared, and difficulties will vanish, and you and He will know that you belong to each other.

If, until now, you have been unable to find a good place to begin, come and kneel to Him, even with your crude perception of His Majesty, and offer up the entreaty of this young man: "What lack I yet?" Then try to follow Him, putting your feet into the

imprint He has left in the gospels—just a step at a time—and He will lead you, by the way of purity and self-sacrifice and altruism, toward a more definite faith and a more perfect life.

“Lead us, O Father, in the paths of right;
Blindly we stumble when we walk alone,
Involved in shadows of a darksome night,
Only with Thee we journey safely on.
Lead us, O Father, to Thy heavenly rest,
However rough and steep the path may be,
Through joy or sorrow, as Thou deemest best,
Until our lives are perfected in Thee.”

THE PERMANENCE OF MEMORY.

"But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."—St. John 16:4.



IT is not strange that so great a philosopher as Jesus should have taken account of the laws of mind. The teacher's art is ever dependent upon his knowledge of the human intellect.

Man is only like a manikin, so far as the work of the anatomist is concerned; and it is only muscle and cartilage and nerve and bone that can be taken apart and passed about for inspection and study. But where life—that force which dominates the machinery of anatomy—enters in, the problem becomes more occult and mysterious, and psychological study seems full of difficulties. And yet, these metaphysical anatomists have done something toward taking the mind apart and investigating the laws of its working.

They have noted certain distinct faculties of the mind, as, for instance, *the faculty of notice*; the first which comes to light in the life of a child; by means of which the existence of the material world is recognized; the faculty of seeing or receiving impressions; the faculty of notice; which ever and always stands at the portal to man's mind and soul.

Then, but little later, there is manifested *the faculty of record*, by which, as upon tender wax or upon a sensitized plate, the thing that was first seen becomes an impression—a record, that is—which will receive additions as other things are seen or felt, and will make the mind a library of information.

Then, with maturer age, we note *the faculty of reflection*, whereby this library of records is brought into review, one fact or impression set over against another, and perhaps some new fact evolved from them or some judgment reached.

And again there comes to light *the faculty of resolves*, wherein the intellect and the moral nature alike have a part; in which the will asserts itself, decisions are reached and resolutions formed which enroll the child among the active forces of the world, a factor to be reckoned with.

Just how the mind does it all, the psychologists do not agree in their ideas, but that the mind has different functions, different departments of activity, none of us will question.

It is of but one of these mental faculties that we shall speak to-day, the faculty of record. It is claimed that when an impression is once received, memory, the recording faculty, treasures it, and, as if carved upon a tablet, it becomes ineffaceable; that what is once known is never lost. Of course, it may be modified even so much as to be totally different from its former self, by the addition of other impressions; just as the tattoo marks upon the body are ineffaceable, and yet may be so modified by other marks and curves as to change entirely their character.

To say that memory never loses what it once received, is what many will dispute who often have difficulty in finding a misplaced fact amid the rubbish of the mind, and it is, of course, a statement which no man can prove to be true.

Some things we remember. They float before our mental field of vision and are present to consciousness the very moment they are wanted. They come as easily as the growing words in the typewriter, being thrown up into vision from the mass which the mind holds, at the very sign of interrogation. When we say that we remember, the action of memory is spontaneous and automatic and without effort or strain or pause.

But there are many things which do not thus come quickly and spontaneously before us when we

want them. We know that we once had them, but they are gone. At least we do not find them. They are not gone to such an extent that we need to learn them over again. They are buried away in some obscure spot in our record-chamber, and their discovery is in the power of recollection. Other things we remember, but these things, really a part of us, we must recall, and to recall a thing means mental effort. Very often we succeed in bringing them back by simply concentrating our minds upon the subject and *calling* for the information; just as some pet of the household which has strayed away will be brought back by a persistent calling of the name. Sometimes memory needs assistance and suggestion, and we fall back upon the laws of association, which by coupling the fact which we desire to recall with the circumstances under which we learned it, or some other fact which we learned with it, give us a clue which enables us to bring it forth in triumph. We do not re-learn it, for we hear no voice and we read no book, but we simply recall it. At other times some sight or sound will call before us facts that came to us years ago and to which we had never given a thought until, by these laws of mental suggestion, they came up suddenly from these older records in the mind.

THE PERMANENCE OF MEMORY.

It is from such instances as these, repeated to such a marvellous extent in every one's life, that the

psychologist generalizes his claim as to the permanence of memory. It has happened so often, that he claims it always will happen, if only the proper association of ideas is found.

Our Lord seems to have placed great reliance upon mental impressions and the laws of association. He was constantly teaching His disciples things which they did not comprehend, and which often clouded their faces with perplexity. More than once He replied to their queries, that all these things would come back to them in future years, when some new experience would not only suggest them, but would bring the solution and interpretation which only experience can give. And so He went on, filling up the records in their minds, not for immediate use, always, but satisfied that memory would do its work, and that after years would find them well equipped, by these very facts which experience would illumine and explain, to carry on the work of teaching.

In the Gospel from which the text is taken, He has been pursuing this policy of stating truth which at the moment was unintelligible to them, but placing so much reliance upon the power of mind that He neither uttered nor seemed to feel misgiving as to their ability to teach, in the future, what He wanted mankind to know.

“But these things have I told you, that when the

time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them."

Certainly all of this has a very practical lesson for every man and woman, in every age, who desires to leave an impression for good upon others. We are poor philosophers if we bound all ideas of usefulness by our own horizons, and tabulate the good by what we see. We must take larger vision, and never leave out of account the mind of man and its wonderful ways of working.

Many a man, unlike one who plants and waits, has preached his sermon and made his appeal, and then asked for a show of hands or some decisive action, that he might know, at once and on the spot, whether his effort has been a success or a failure.

Many another, unlike the father in the parable whose son was captive of the dissolute and companion of swine but who waited for the memory of early love and happiness to bring him home again, has seen all the early training of his children seemingly come to naught; all his advice spurned; all his fair castles broken down, and, in the gloaming, has wished they had never been born; when he might have been wiser, and surely happier, if he had trusted more to the power of memory to awaken in the outcasts, by the magic of music and the sight of some bowed form and gentle face, the thought of a mother's prayers

and a father's yearning, and thus to bring them to home and to God.

Deathbed repentances—ah, how men sneer at them! And yet if you take out of the heart of God the pity that will pardon, at the eleventh hour, a soul that remembers and uplifts a cry for mercy, you have robbed Him of a quality that is the choicest charm of Infinite Love.

As to sermons and appeals, we must not feel that the momentary impression is all we have right to think of. How often beyond computation have men and women gone from the place of worship treasuring a thought that has helped them or inspired them, and which they have carried all their lives long!

Do a mother's prayers count for nothing? So it may seem for years, and the fear of it may have broken many a mother's heart. But in the years of childhood, when the mind was plastic, there were impressions made that will give memory a work of rescue to perform—so mercifully persistent is its power—before life is done. Penitence is not confined within the walls of a church. But wherever it is, God is. In castles and in hovels; among the prosperous, whose resources have helped them to live without Him, and among the outcasts whose sin has not always helped them to forget, memory plays a redemptive part in reminding the sinner of long-forgotten days and ways, when there was innocence and

worship, and he seeks the privilege of confession and of absolution, just because he was taught by a priestess of the Most High God in the ancestral home.

We need not wonder that the Roman Church, or any other Church, wants to teach the children. There is deep philosophy in the contention that, if they are rightly taught, they will remember, and that, though they may afterward be engulfed by temptation so that there is a gap of years in their religious experiences, sooner or later they will want guidance into the presence of the same God whom they knew as children.

This thought gives value to the work of parents and teachers and all others who give out something to bless and uplift another life. It may not pay for the moment. But we are working for life—for eternal life. And such has been man's mental endowment at the hands of his Creator, that memory may be active all through the years, in spite of the profligacy which is sometimes sought as its cure, until the sinner finally comes to himself, and the great Master signals for the Hallelujah Chorus of the angels' oratorio.

God be praised for that retentive faculty of the mind which makes of life a Palimpsest record; so that, though it may have been touched by profane hands and put to worldly uses, its early impressions may not be lost; but through the marks which im-

pious hands have left upon it, the early writing will be plain enough to make it sacred and to make it worth the saving.

That men are silent and unresponsive need not imply that they have ceased to feel or to think. The herding of swine and the revelry of the dissolute may not be spiritual occupations, but, in the midst of them all, an active mind may be busy with contrasts, and memory may cause the heart to ache by picturing the things that might have been.

The prodigal son was not in church when he came to himself. No sound of organ tamed the delirium of his soul. No blending of soft colors from the Madonna or the angels in Gothic windows streamed into his life to deepen his sense of awe. No voice of warning or of invitation came from the minister of God to bid him to prayer. All these things which mean so much to some of us were wanting. He was left alone to the ministry of memory. Starved by the things he fed on, his mind retained the knowledge of better days, and led him to hope and resolution. Two of the most notable cases of reformation I have ever witnessed were men who came in a state of beastly intoxication; came of their own volition, and insisted upon my witnessing their pledge of future abstinence. Such was their condition that it seemed impossible they would remember on the morrow what they had done or care to abide

by it. But they knew full well, and have risen high in repute among their fellows by the resolution to which they were brought by the power of memory alone.

In these days of electricity the air above us may be full of messages, flying hither and thither, when we hear nothing but the twittering birds and rustling leaves—messages of mighty import in the lives of men. Even so, in the silence, the minds of men are often attent upon visions and memories of earlier days and lessons. The pew may be vacant and the soul may be seeking some place where God is not, but memory links the present with all that has been known before and the cry goes up: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”

We seek not to-day to sound any new note or declare any novel gospel. We ask you only to turn back the pages, and call to mind the days when a gentle voice spoke to you, and fair hands on your head gave you a mother’s benediction; the days when you knelt and prayed. They were better days for your soul than these when the things of earth have no power to satisfy and the hunger of the heart cannot be appeased. We can pray you no greater blessing than that memory may be true to you, and again and again bring to you from out the treasury of the mind the things that alone can make for peace.

THE LIFE OF GRACE A GROWTH.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 3:18.



HERE are probably very few perfect people in the world. We have seen people who are sweet and lovable, generous and kind, and all that, but we probably never yet have seen wings on human species, nor halos that marked Divine regality, nor any character so armored with goodness that there was not some spot of weakness in the encasement to indicate something less than absolute perfection. When men become perfect, the general belief is that they go to heaven by the very first chariot.

The Church is looked upon by many of its critics as an institution for the manufacture of perfection; as if, by some mysterious alchemy, the soul that is earth-stained may at once be transformed into a beatific and saintly state. But many of us have long

since realized that there is no patent process from which saintship can result, any more than there is a communicable secret whereby an infant may at once bound into man's estate.

No doubt many of us are just weak enough to be glad that the world is not overstocked with perfect people, and for no other reason than that plebeian one that "Misery likes company." We feel that too many samples of perfection would be oppressive. We should be avoiding them on the street corners; not because their virtues would not be agreeable and attractive, but because their very display of character's ideal actually realized—the immense and difficult attainment actually achieved—would dishearten us in our beginnings of godliness, just as the last contestants in a race will so often give up and drop out when they see the man who has distanced them, already at the goal.

And then, if perfection were an earthly attainment, the Bible would have to be re-written, to make it fit the new condition of actualized ideals. There would be no place in it for Abraham, who, though mentioned as the friend of God, was very human, after all, and did some things that were ethically improper. Nor should we have Jacob with his foxy shrewdness, nor Noah with his occasional bibulous outbreaks, nor Simon Peter nor John with their peculiar characteristics. But with so many imper-

fect characters portrayed, the good old Book is given such an air of reality and sincerity, we know it to be written for men such as we are. It does not come to us who are "less than the least of all saints," calling us to an impossible goodness, and taunting us with a view of men ideal in every sense and therefore out of touch with us and valueless as teachers. It is no fairy tale for magic men. But as a real Book for real men, it shows us how those of like passions with ourselves have fought the battle of life and won. And as in the historic and biographical portions, so in the didactic; it sets forth remedies for our daily ills, and offers counsel and help to men whose hearts are constantly the battle ground for forces of good and evil, as to how we, too, in common with its tempted and sometimes yielding characters, may be fitted for a holier realm.

And as in the text, the method to be pursued is one of development and growth. [St. Peter, who wrote the words, was not the man to expect maturity in the disciples at a single bound. His own experience forbade so Utopian a dream. In this chapter, he holds his readers to the thought of spotlessness as an ultimate end of their striving, but he is careful to present as well the gradual stages by which they are to reach so desirable a condition. The Christian religion has a large place for progression and development. And it seems that in this the Divine Being

has but presented laws that are in harmony with His ordinary ways of working.

The instances in the universe in which spasmodic action has been noted, or instantaneous results achieved, are very few. The world was not rescued from its nebulous and chaotic state, fitted and furnished and populated, on the spur of the moment. There were the long and progressive stages of the creative period; the emergence and concentration of matter from the nebulous state; the era of continent and mountain making; the subsidence of valleys, making place for rivers and seas; the creation of plant and animal life and the gradual evolution of more perfect types; the volcanic and chemical action whereby the earth should become a vast storehouse of fuel and gems and wealth, for the coming man; the action of glacier and stream in building up soil for human tillage, and so on; until, after the various creative epochs, the earth was ready for the advent of man.

According to the progressive principle upon which God had built up a world, so would He rescue man from chaos. Not all at once, by virtue of His own force and power, but as with the world, giving a start, and naming a goal, and then implanting a force of evolution that would lead on and on to better things and more perfect stages.

When Adam was placed in Eden he was not per-

fect, in the sense in which we hope to attain perfection. Before his fall, it is true that he had a negative goodness—that is, he had no vices—he was in a state of equilibrium between good and evil, capable of moving downward toward depravity, or upward, to the mastery and acquirement of positive virtues. The Creator had fitted up the earth as a vast laboratory for his investigation and then adjured him to attempt some positive acquirements.

He was put here, in the words of Genesis, to “replenish the earth and to *subdue* it.” He was not created a master, but with the ability to become a master. The idea that a man could jeopardize his religion by any sort of scientific inquiry was unknown in the Garden of Eden. Adam’s God and Nature’s God were one and the same; and He put the man He had formed into such relations to nature that he might delve into its secrets, and solve its problems, and experiment with its resources, until he should know it and so know more of Him. Mastery of truth, of any sort, should not only broaden a man’s horizon, but add to his knowledge of God.

And not only are we advantaged by knowledge of nature that is beneath us, but that part of nature which is about us, the knowledge of life.

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime.”

One cannot read the biography of one of the

world's worthies, who has really achieved something, without being stimulated and helped, and shown how to be something better than one has been.

And rightly does St. Peter urge his friends to a study of the biography of Jesus. To know more of Him is to know more of God and more of life in its relations to Him. So many religions that have not Christ in them have given their followers a caricature of God. The life of Jesus is a reflection of God. And it is by knowing more of Him that we learn what things God approves—what spirit on our part, and what actions. We cannot make right advancement toward the ideal life, unless we gain more and more of a knowledge of Him whose character is ideal, and whose gospel is constructive in the highest sense.

“But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

The text is so simple that no one needs explain it. It is ours only to heed the injunction. We need not even think of the sublime condition of saintship to which we are at last to come. That may make the process seem too long and the end too hopeless and remote. Forget that. Forget the heights that are to be climbed. Forget all but one thing, and that to grow; to be something more, to know something more, to accomplish something better, all the time; that is enough to remember. And

that is the only practical thing for us to strive for always. There is no magic mystery about it. Nothing but a plain rule for all of us, that we make our days better and better, by mastering more and more of the knowledge of Christ, and bring ourselves more fully into sympathy with His thoughts and desires and actions.

How shall we do it? Simply by concentrating our energies in that line; by resolving and doing; by holding ourselves firmly to this one thing, undismayed by this failure or that, and determining that, by God's help, there shall be some slight progression always.

Of a certain character it is said:

"Alfred Vargrave was one of those men who achieve
So little, because of the much they conceive.
With irresolute finger he knock'd at each one
Of the doorways of life, and abided in none.
His course, by each star that would cross it, was set,
And whatever he did he was sure to regret.

* * * * *

The man who seeks one thing in life, and but one,
May hope to achieve it, before life be done;
But he who seeks all things, wherever he goes,
Only reaps from the hopes which around him he sows
A harvest of barren regrets."

God be praised for the prospect of better things; for the prophecy that has so much hope in it; for the promise that we may one day really achieve the things that have been the burden of our prayers and

the glamor of our dreams. No leader who has stormed the ramparts and scaled the heights and planted his victorious flag on the battlements of the castle whose strength so long defied him, can know greater joy in the glory of achievement, than shall we, who, though great tribulation, shall one day find ourselves victors in the moral world and fellow-citizens of the saints in light. The triumph will be so complete as to minimize the struggles which in their day seemed so disastrous. The crown always sheds a glory on the cross and makes it more beautiful than in the days when it was borne upon our shoulders or lifted us aloft in the pain of personal experience. Just to know that is worth something; that the day is coming when the light will be so bright as to baptize our crosses with its radiance and transform every sad experience by which we are bettered in heart, so that we shall be glad to remember them always, and shall feel that we have been befriended by them.

But that we may journey toward the gladness of that day by such easy stages, by breathings, by heart-throbs, by infinitesimal divisions on the dial; that we may come to our conquest as the sea takes the land—now heaving and now receding, until the shore is compassed by the last tiny wave that marks the flood—all this is comfort unspeakable. We grow by thoughts, by impulses, by prayers. Every good thought brands itself on the soul which breeds it,

before it springs out to touch the world. Every good impulse creates a new trend for the life which generates it. Every prayer for usefulness and goodness gives somewhat of bias to the man who offers it.

← All these things are tiny when compared with the great problem of human destiny, but it is the glory of our indulgent Master that by just such infinitesimal things we are furthered in our chase of the ideal. Do you not know that every clean thought means a clean spot whence it sprang? Are you not sure that every worthy impulse is symptom of a worthy instinct and by so much a point of contact with God? Can you not see that every prayer bears in itself the power of purification, because it is a struggle to achieve—a struggle which means the sloughing off of something deleterious? These things therefore mean more than the value at which they are ordinarily appraised.)

The man with weakened physique, who seeks to build up tissue, must not discount the value of microscopic units; he must busy himself with putting color and vitality into corpuscles. These will be the measure of his growth and convalescence. And so the spiritual nature is to find its perfectness by such trifling things as men often throw out from calculation. The student of seismic disturbances is not satisfied to know what everybody else knows and feels, in the quaking of the earth, but turns to the seismograph,

that he may catch the trembling which is far too infinitesimal to be detected by any sensory power of man. And it is in this region—the region unknown and unfelt by the ordinary man—that he finds his greatest interest.

Here is our lesson—for ours is a problem as great as merely physical dynamics—that the little things are the mighty things, after all; and that the great bound from sin to righteousness is not to be a moment's work, but the slow and patient process of a lifetime, wherein there seems to be no progress as measured by the eye; but where the soul comes to its maturity as the babe becomes a man; fed and furthered by the experience of the moment, and helped by the grace of God to grow, *to grow.*]

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

A STUDY OF THE POINT OF VIEW.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of Man, that Thou visitest him."—Psalm 8:3 and 4.



AVID had led a life which put him close to nature. As the shepherd of his father's flocks he had many a call to contemplation, and while he must have been conscious of a vision of the world as something beyond a place for pasturage and shelter—a vision which set him apart from the beasts for which he cared—his daily survey of the great facts and forces about him gave him a shriveling sense of unimportance.

To be out after nightfall, on plain or mountain, where human speech is hushed and one can commune with none but one's self, is to see the heavens as peo-

ple do not see them in the suffocation of cities and amid the clamor of a crowd. Silence, solitude, and space, these are aids to contemplation. One cannot spend his nights alone with nature without gaining respect for its greatness. And what wonder that the visions of the shepherd youth should persist in memory and bring him often a sense of human littleness! How many men, looking earnestly at the heavens, with their myriad lights twinkling everywhere—even without knowledge of constellations and orbits and cycles—have had the same sense of insignificance! Said Carlyle: "When I have gazed into these stars, have they not looked down upon me, as if with pity, from their serene spaces, like eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man?"

This is a Psalm of the night. There is no mention of the sun. The moon and the stars and the silence stir thoughts which have been active in the brains of many men when they have bidden "good-night" to the world which other men inhabit with them, and are left alone with nature and the problems of the mind.

These are the hours when men come to themselves. Not only do nerves find rest by the loosing of their tension, and muscles and tendons renew themselves by relaxation, but the soul mirrors itself, and, hurt by its shame, resolves to be more beautiful another day. Mid-day is not the best hour for the mending of the mind, because the sun is not gentle

enough to woo us to a contemplative mood. We cannot then look heavenward without a vision so blinding that we do not care to look again. But when night comes the stars flash word for man's attention, the moon invites to a feast of wholesome thought, and children wonder and men become serious. Yes, and they shrivel in the matter of self-esteem, as they realize more of the greatness and majesty that are above them. It was so in the past, and in our own time the telescope has revealed still other shining worlds in the depths which human vision can not penetrate, and has left us wondering whether stronger lenses may not in the future carry on the field of discovery to an almost infinite extent.

No man can think himself great when he measures himself by what the heavens disclose. This is the inevitable result of such comparison, that he esteems himself an inconsequent atom, occupying for a brief day some trifling space on one of the smaller bodies among the myriads of the solar system and the others to which it may be subsidiary. It is good medicine generally, for it tends to promote democracy. Men find themselves bunched in mediocrity.

The man whose eminence among his fellows is due to the golden pedestal on which he stands, and who lives to grasp and to guard what gold he may, finds the truth flashed into his soul, that, in the eyes that look down from the heights, he is scarcely as

great as the child which forages among acres of bloom to fill toy baskets by tiny handfuls, and the petals of whose flowers, freshened by the tender touch of Nature, fade and lose their fragrance in the grasp of grosser hands. The orator, who thought his eloquence the symbol of omnipotence, finds himself underrated by those nocturnal comparisons, and knows that in Nature's rating he is no greater than a bird which has been lured into bondage, and which, carol it never so loudly, is a poor caged bird after all, whose food and drink are dependent upon another's thoughtfulness, and the trivial tragedy of whose death would little interrupt the progress of the world. The legislator, proud in his sense of power while the day lasts, finds himself wondering, after all, whether he can be of greater consequence in the sum total of universal history than the child by the seashore, whose hardly wrought castle in the sand is dissolved like a film, without trace of turret or foundation, by the touch of a little smooth hand pushed out from the sea. The musician who has cudgeled and coaxed until all sounds at his will blend into bewitching harmony, wonders, under the spell of this taunting from the sky, whether, even if his voice has penetrated far into space, it has been as more than the chirp of a cricket amid the music of the spheres. The man of intellect, whose dictum has been the authority of his fellow-men, realizes that the patience of a life-

time has only rewarded him with a glimpse of the hem of Wisdom's garment, and he knows that his mastery is comparatively no greater than that of the sheep which bleats but a single syllable of the world's great language. And those who live for pleasure only, for harmony and color and sound, and taste and vision; who touch no part of other men's burdens, but who live for a good time and think, once in a while, that they are having it; these are led to question whether they are of greater relative importance than the butterfly, which flits from flower to flower, and, if not pilloried by the hand it has enticed, finds its life bound by a season, and knows that after its little victory of flight, it can transmit to its children nothing better than the power to crawl.

Every man who puts himself in the balance with Nature, finds himself wanting. And many have been filled with such utter dismay that they have argued the absurdity of prayer and of all other notions which attribute to the Author of Nature any thought of Providence or any care for the individual man.

What they need is a different point of view. The Psalmist said: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" The emphasis needs to be put upon the first half of the text: "*When I consider Thy*

heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained." It depends upon the point of view. A debate is not a monologue. No trial or hearing consists of prosecution merely. Questions have two sides. It is natural enough for a man whose bed is on the ground and who peers into the heavens while he woos the hypnotism of sleep, to emphasize his littleness and unimportance, and even to question whether God can care for him. And though it may lead him to a democracy of sentiment which makes him sweeter to live with, and so may be a profitable occupation, it is only one point of view. The matter is not one-sided.

This chapter suggests man's littleness, but it also emphasizes man's native greatness. We must seek other points of view. This very chapter concludes: "For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."

There are those who conclude that this part of the Psalm refers to the Christ alone, and in no sense to man, but in spite of the reference to it in the New Testament, it seems clear that this interpretation has been given to make the passage fit into a certain

system of theology. It does refer to Christ as the representative man. There may, indeed, be some special sense in which a part of it refers to Him. But it is not wise to trim verses to fit creeds, or to tone down expressions whose interpretation is obvious, in order to square them with any mechanical system of theology. If the theological pen-knife is to be used at all, it is better that the creed of men should be whittled than that the Word of God should be touched.

The natural application of the whole chapter is to man. The Psalmist is first depressed by a comparison of man with the evidences of God's greatness, as shown in His celestial handiwork. But his sense of elation results from a new point of view, as he regards the dignity of man's original creation, and the dominance over nature, which was God's primal gift to him.

Be careful to note the translation here: "Thou hast made him a little lower ('but a little lower' is perhaps more accurate) than *the angels*," so the verse reads. But if that were correct, the first verse of Genesis ought to read, "In the beginning *the angels* created the heavens and the earth." The same Hebrew word Elohim is used in both cases. It is the word for God, and this is its universal translation in the Book of Genesis. It is not only a stretch of the imagination, but a travesty upon language to trans-

late it "angels" in this place, for there is no other place in the Scripture where such an attempt is made, and it probably would not have been done in this case but for the fear that literalness might interfere with somebody's theology. The word is "God," and the passage should read: "For Thou hast made him but a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." This fits exactly with the declaration of the Creator's purpose: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." We need to see our birthright, my brothers, from the view-point of the Book of God.

We have witnessed the truth of a large part of the declaration already. The dominance of man over all living creatures has been universal. Everywhere that supremacy has been manifest, and wherever the question of utility has arisen, the beasts of the field and even the fowls of the air have been harnessed

and brought into service. True indeed are the words of George Herbert:

"More servants wait on man,
Than he'll take notice of."

But even more than these other forms of life that wait on us, the forces and the treasure-house of Nature have been brought to our service. Coal has warmed us, gems have enriched us, metals have been extracted and turned to a multiplicity of uses, the herbs cure our ills and satisfy our hunger, the winds draw water from the depths and propel our craft on every sea, the force which devastates in lightning becomes most docile and utilitarian in this wonderful age. And so the race which came into being as God's climax in creation, goes on in the mastery of new forces, fulfilling His design and prophecy, and satisfying His great soul as a father takes pride in the achievements of his children. We are not to look at the vast expanse of the firmament in order to know our place in creation. It is not a question of bulk, but of birthright. Doubtless a day will come, in the expansion of mind which heaven brings to God's children, when we shall not even be depressed by a sense of disproportion as we look at any part of the material universe.

Mind is so supremely the superior of matter, that even now the mountains are tunnelled, continents are cut asunder, and one man's will affects the interests

of all the world. In a thousand laboratories, tests and experiments are going on which mean larger powers for the race. And in a multitude of quiet places men are communing with God and struggling with ideas which will open to the universal mind new and wonderful vistas for thought. This is true because God has built us after a Divine model and has given us something of His own nature of which sin has not even robbed us completely.

He gave us this in the old Eden, which is a sweet spot in the folk-lore of our people, but after ages of humanity's exile from Eden, God showed His mindfulness of man by a sublime visitation, in the person of His Son, and in this, indeed, He has crowned us with glory and honor. What matter what may be the multitude or magnitude of the stars, so long as the life of Jesus may lighten every man that cometh into the world! The dignity of a nation is witnessed by the rank of the ambassadors who visit it. And when the embassy consists of a Prince and his retinue, it is a mark of special distinction. Is it less when a Prince of the House of God comes into man's world, convoyed by angels—can it be less delicate a tribute to the dignity of the birthright of these far-off scions of royal lineage or less emphatic proof of desire for affectionate relations?

Sin has been a long time in the world, and surely man is less masterful in every way than if he had

been true to his birthright and had suffered himself to be tutored in mind and heart toward approach to that omniscience and omnipotence which mark the character of God.

But the Son of God has been His Ambassador, to remind us of our native dignity and to bid us forsake the path of sin, and take up full and cordial relations with the Court of Heaven. Until we do that we shall be without peace and we shall fail of the mastery.

Never could men meet with greater honor than to have Him come with a treaty of peace and open His own veins that it might be signed with royal blood.

The Heaven that waits was built for us. Its choirs have some anthems to sing because we have been bidden home *and are expected*. And when we turn our faces thither and make confession of our sin, our assurance of safety is not in the fact that we can explain or condone or expiate, but that, first of all, we were created as God's children; that our Elder Brother came to our world to illumine it with Divine love; and that He to whom we turn and ask for mercy, is Our Father God.

THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.

A QUESTION OF REWARD.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.”—St. Matthew 20:1-16.



THE first word in this parable indicates that it is not to be considered by itself. “For, the kingdom of heaven is like,” etc. This, then, is the “because,” the illustration, the explanation, the setting right of some false note or theory that has gone before. Looking back, then, into the previous chapter, we find a rich young man before whom our Lord has been placing the necessity for utter abnegation and sacrifice, going away to count the cost and work out for himself the problem of consecration. Noting the earnestness of his struggle with himself, Jesus comments upon the difficulty in the way of a rich man who thinks of following Him. Simon Peter, not yet liberated from his narrower life by the spiritual quickening of Pentecost, seems to be biased in his mind by the spirit of commercialism in religion—indeed it was he who, on another occasion, got his ethics so mixed up with mathematics that he wanted to know if seven times would not be enough to forgive the same offender—and now he introduces the query as to how much they are to get for loyalty. “We have forsaken all,

and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Our Lord points out to him the fact that usurious compensation waits upon every expenditure for others, and that every really loyal follower is sure of a blessing far outmeasuring his service, and then adds the warning: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Then the text follows, as an illustration. And you must remember that it is only an illustration, like a story one tells, with proper embellishment, to emphasize his point. This one is never to be considered as a complete teaching in itself. Its meaning can never be clear unless it is studied as the story Jesus tells in illustration of His warning against Peter's spirit of commercialism in religion, that the first may become last and the last first.

There are certain things the parable is not designed to teach. The first laborers who were hired agreed to work for a denarius (not "a penny") a day. This was the day's pay of a Roman soldier—the common wage for ordinary service. The others who were called into service at intervals during the day agreed to no definite contract, but gave their implicit trust to the good faith of the master of the vineyard, who said: "Whatsoever is right, I will give you." When the natural time for reckoning came—for it was required to pay for all menial ser-

vice at the close of each day—it seems that every man received a denarius, a day's wage.

In the mere matter of coin, each man received the same amount, but we are not therefore to conclude that in the life of the religious, rewards are always equal. Indeed there is this paradox about the parable itself, that equality of payment involved inequality of reward. Spiritual reward must ever be a question of capacity. One's experience on earth, which makes for particularity and individuality—there being no two lives alike—must create a special reward, a particularity of enjoyment. For instance, all of us love music, but we do not all hear the same things, although our enjoyment comes from the same external source. Each soul has its own harmonics, its own capacity, and what is sweet and delightful to one, has power to lift another into rapture. We all see the same things, the masterpieces of art or the magnificence of nature, but in the telling of it all it seems that each has had his own particular vision, the artistic quality of the soul determining the thrill of one as against the quiet satisfaction of another. We may all read the same letter, but whether its lines fit into the metronym of poetry or flow into the common sluice of prose, may be all a question of love. The heart may be the arbiter.

And so it must be that heaven is adorned with *many* mansions, for it must needs be a place whose

definiteness and degree are determined by that special capacity for enjoyment which is the result of our personal experience. In that other parable, the home was the same into which the wayward son was welcomed, for himself and his elder brother, but they saw it through different eyes, and the very law of contrasts made it more like heaven to the soul redeemed. The father of that parable was one indivisible character, but everybody knows that the poor prodigal, magnetized by his touch and warmed by his caress, felt more of Divinity in his nature. Hence we may dismiss from our minds all thought that our Lord meant to teach us that everybody is to share alike in the spiritual world. Redemption is a word of fixed spelling and universal definition, but the personal equation of each life makes it as absolutely a personal and unique thing as if heaven were a separate and specific creation for each one of us. We shall all sing the same song, perhaps, as we gather in the presence of the King, but it will be as truly a personal song, because of our peculiar sorrows and burdens, as if we sang in a language of our own. Sorrow pierces each heart in a different spot or at varying depths. Each soul chants a separate litany. Every sinner sees heaven through the prism of his own woes. And to every redeemed man and woman God appears in so peculiarly personal a form, because the story of every life is so absolutely personal

a tale of woe, as to lead each to claim Him for a personal possession, "My Lord and my God." It cannot be the aim of this parable to teach that the nominal rewards of all lives are the same, because experience is the test of value; and individuality of experience, of which capacity is born, must make heaven the personal possession and enjoyment of each sinner upon whose face falls the light from its open door.

What, then, is the teaching of the parable? This, it would seem: that the final analysis of character and value is not quantitative but qualitative. It is not so much the date of our spiritual beginning and the length of our religious history, as the vigor and earnestness of our religious life. The parable is not reported to us with enough minuteness of detail, perhaps, but it would not be surprising if there had been a note in the story to indicate that these late-comers into the vineyard, stirred into something more than nominal service by the very lateness of their beginning, had entered into their work with unusual zeal, in the hope of making up by energy for the shortened day, and so had commended themselves to the indulgence and magnanimity of their employer.

It is plain enough that our Lord means it to be a parable of warning and of encouragement. It should be a parable of warning, first, to those who are already enrolled in the kingdom, because of the possibility of the reversal of relative position; the first

may become last. This sort of thing always happens upon examination, that the matter of relative standing is rearranged; the slothful drop back and the industrious forge to the front. Judas was an apostle when these words were spoken, but there came a time when he was deposed. How is it when wars begin? Do not popular idols often fall, and unknown men wear the laurels at the end? God means His work to be done, and this world to be won for Himself. If the leaders of the present fail in their duty, may we not expect Him to call others to take their place? All of us need to take this to heart, for it is as awful as it must be humiliating, to be superseded by others whom God may call to the work because He has been disappointed in us.

This warning came first to the Hebrew people, for Christ came first to them. And the reversal came in the calling of the Gentiles to assume the task of redeeming mankind after the Jews had spurned the worldwide task. The reversal stands to-day, and the nations of mankind, who came later into the vineyard of the King, bear the honor and the obligation of this universal evangelism.

What has taken place among nations in fulfillment of this prophecy of the Christ, in the promotion of the Gentiles to be the representatives of the kingdom to all the peoples of the earth, and the setting aside of those who first were chosen, may occur

among individuals. We are called to the kingdom in high vocation, that we may carry on the work of our Lord. If we fail, we must expect to be set aside. Utilitarianism is the key to power. The age in which we live is no more practical than the religion we are charged to spread. It is designed to be of immense value to mankind. If we busy ourselves so completely with theories that the world gets no aid from us that is of practical value in solving its problems and meeting its temptations, the system of which we are exponents will soon become effete. If we try to become to men what Christ was, touching them at every point of appeal and need, and making ourselves valuable in their daily lives, there can be no setting aside, for we shall have become, by the genius of Christ's gospel incarnate in us, necessary to their life.

It is not enough for the Church to be ancient; it must also be modern. To have sprung from an apostolic source is a credit, but it involves an obligation. There is something to live up to, and the cry "Back to apostolic days" is necessary once in a while, lest we become intoxicated with the honor of a noble lineage and lulled into inactivity and uselessness by the thought of a proud position. We have men and women and means, and there is a world at our elbows to be won for Christ. If we foster the agencies for relieving the woes of mankind, and bear about with us the spirit of our Master in an effort to reveal to

them the character of our Divine Father, we shall live. If we fail in this we shall have only a history whose continuity we have broken and a name which we have dishonored; only this, and nothing more. Certain of the sects which have sprung up owe their existence to the fact that the old Church failed to do its duty. Whether the dream of Christian unity shall ever be achieved may depend upon the same question in the future.

But the parable is designed to be one of encouragement to those who come late into the kingdom. It is a common regret on the part of men and women that they did not earlier identify themselves with this great cause, because so much time seems to have been lost. Do you not see in the parable, or between the lines, that the late comer may outstrip his fellows in value? None of us can pay his way in religious life—the blessings are too great for that—but is it not possible by zeal and earnestness to make up a little that has been lost in time? It is important that you may consider it so, and may make your beginning to-day, resolving to do to your utmost all that seems possible in reproducing His life and accomplishing the objects of His blessed ministry.

It is a mark of grace, that some work for the world's redemption has been reserved for you, for it would be a sorry reflection for you, when the people who have been helped toward trust in God and mas-

tery for themselves, take up the shout of victory, that you had had no share in any man's conquest, and therefore could experience no thrill in any sinner's song. There is work for you, and in doing it lies the way to a sweeter heaven and a more thorough enjoyment of its glories.

But perhaps the chief meaning of the parable is that the Kingdom of God is of grace, and not of debt. In not a single case did the master of the vineyard deal unjustly. The earliest workers had no complaint as to the keeping of their contract. Absolute justice was met in the payment of a full day's wage to each. None of them had less than he agreed to work for. The whole complaint lay in the fact that he chose to be indulgent to somebody else. It was not that they received less than they ought but that others received more than they ought. And that, after all, is not a very manly sort of accusation. Truly did he say: "I do thee no wrong." Mercy, and not justice, is the keyword of this parable.

Our Lord means us to note that we may not only look for justice at God's hands—He will surely give us that, for He knows every force that wars against us and every inheritance and besetment that weaken us, and He will deal with us as fairly as our dearest friend—but that we may look for generosity as well.

"I feel—I know—that God is love,
And knowing this, I know it all."

Everybody who reads this parable must feel that the master of the vineyard did no wrong, but that he did more than right. And, after all, is not that the teaching of all the Scriptures? There are a great many problems in the lives of men which puzzle us, and we often give our sympathy to others who have borne superhuman burdens or battled against terrific odds; but concerning every one of them we may rest upon this "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture" that "the Judge of all the earth will do right." This is not His pride, merely, that He will do right, but that He will do more than right. It is always "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," that He pours into our bosom.

How glad we may be that our lives are not consumed in frantic efforts at appeasement, and that, far above the unsatisfying gods of paganism, whose devotees must grovel and propitiate, there shines the character of an ideal Father, with all the traits of that sacred relationship and without any of the faults of earth! With what confidence may we present Him to men! Untouched by any breath of evil, strong beyond the measures of man's imagination, uninfluenced by unfriendly accusation, all that Jesus was to souls that were soiled by the sin that they loathed—and that was everything—patient, compassionate, considerate, and yet all the day long stretching out His hands in mute appeal for reconciliation

to a disobedient and a gainsaying people. We want justice; yes, but we want a great deal more; for at the bar of our own hearts we stand condemned. But, beloved, if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and more magnanimous. In the repository of His breast is the grave for our secrets. In His brain are plans for the redemption of a great multitude that no man can number. In His heart is the love that condones and forgets and fosters magnanimity. And when they gather yonder, before His throne, no doubt He bids the angels think of the vacant places and go forth on their blessed mission to minister to us who are to be, let us fondly hope, the heirs of salvation. His benediction will be the crown of all achievement, and His kiss of peace will be the ideal of our happiest dream.

“The hour draws near, howe’er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own
And lift void hand alone
For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that gate no toll;
Giftless we come to Him who all things gives,
And live because He lives.”

John G. Whittier.

THE ASSURANCE OF ELECTION.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 1:10, 11.



^{some} HERE are ~~a good many~~ texts in the Bible over which we puzzle and perplex ourselves, much to the hurt of our minds, and perhaps for the sole reason that we have not been warned about them. Of course, the texts are not noxious, in themselves, but the perplexity of mind into which we are brought by their application to our own cases is the hurtful thing. The drug which the pharmacist puts upon the counter, with a "poison" label on it, may be somewhat the same. Its creation is not a curse, for it has a real value in proper hands, but the warning label is put upon it for the sole reason that it is not designed for

promiscuous application; and that it cannot be so applied without some peril or discomfort.

That sin against the Holy Ghost, "which hath never forgiveness," "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," has doubtless given more unnecessary trouble to the saints of God than anything else that ever was written. Some have become insane by their brooding over the possibility of their commission of the unpardonable sin, and many others, having too strong a grip on themselves to yield to despair, have suffered from occasional misgivings. What it is, more than the fact that persistent opposition to God may ultimately harden one's heart beyond all desire for better things, probably nobody will be able to explain with perfect clearness and satisfaction. It is one of those subjects which may profitably be avoided by all who are striving to live nobly and who have a wish to please God. For, after all, the fear of God and the keeping of His commandments "is the whole duty of man." Unpardonable sins do not fall in the way of prayerful people.

Another of these troublesome texts is the one "Ye must be born again;" and many people have halted at the beginning of a Christian career, too conscientious to make a false profession, and too sure that a text which they cannot test applies to them as a matter for Christian consciousness. It was the text designed for the discomfiture of a philosopher, who

needed to be taught that, after the analogy of nature, religion has its mysteries, and that there are great acts of God which baffle human understanding. Everybody knows, who stops to ponder the analogy, that its chief application must be to the act of God, and that it is not a text to be submitted to the convert's consciousness as the test of his salvation. It may be many a year before one begins to understand it.

The matter of calling and election is another of these Bible subjects which have power to paralyze with fear the children of God. A great deal of time, in the aggregate, has been consumed with efforts to make an incomprehensible truth clear to the poor souls who staggered at it; but all of us ought to know that foreknowledge, predestination, election, and effectual calling—these are acts of God and beyond our paltry grasp. It is well for us to leave them to the Divine Being who has to do with them and can therefore comprehend them. Impossible lessons were never left for the mastery of God's children. We had better avoid them, at least, until the many plain and practical, and therefore appropriate lessons of His Holy Word have been learned.

No man can know, at any early stage of his Christian experience, that he has been an object of predestination and election, and no man ought to know it as a mere matter of revelation and philosophy. Too many times the preface of a book can better be under-

*than
brothers*

stood after one has completed the book. And there are matters which we often place before the gaze of those who are at the beginning or in the childhood of a new life, which are to find their solution in the later experiences which are to illumine them, or in the new day when we shall be unfettered in our minds and may see God as He is.

Calling and election have so often been viewed as problematic things by Christians. If we cannot comprehend them, what shall we do about it? Fortunately St. Peter has pointed the way to a most sensible course:

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

“For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” He does not say: “If ye do this thing”; *i.e.*, “Make your calling and election sure.” Heaven is not dependent upon one’s philosophy. The expression is plural: “If ye do these things.” So we are carried back in the chapter to something of which the expression takes hold.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience;

and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ah, it is a blessed thing for us, when our minds get tangled amid the underbrush of dogma and befogged with the vapors of philosophy, that we may always find in God's Word some very practical thing to serve as the key to our perplexities! And here is the thought of St. Peter; that practice is better than philosophy, and that doing leads to knowing. The more one does, the better one knows. As to theory and practice, every student may testify as to the rapidity with which theories have been fixed in the mind and facts have been impressed by *practical work*. There are many cases where the theoretical part is merely a laborious matter of memory, the mind having set itself the task of memorizing veiled and mysterious words or formulæ; and it is in the laboratory, or other avenue to practical exercise, that the heart of the subject finds its revelation.

This is the first sense in which we shall consider our text—the subjectivity of the matter—the *making plain to one's self* of the fact of calling and election. If we may not comprehend the mysterious work of God, we may at least gain the assurance of

salvation by the practical development of character and the practical exercise of charity.

One begins with one's faith; not some other body's faith, but one's own, be it much or little—perhaps, merely the faith that is found in holy desire. So the apostle proceeds: "Add to your faith, virtue." The Greek expression changes this from a mechanical process of addition, or the laying of Christian graces side by side, as one is able to master them. It is not "add to," but "put in," in the sense of giving a fuller supply. "Put in your faith, virtue"—like the putting of ingredient after ingredient into the mixture which is to result in a full-rounded Christian character. Virtue means manliness, vigor, force, courage. Piety and manliness are to go together. Faith is not to be the bleached visage of a puny soul. One's effort must be to develop a faith that has courage and vigor in it. But we must put in our courage knowledge or intelligence, discernment, prudence, enlightened judgment. Courage, vigor, force—these all need direction by a well-ordered intelligence and a calm judgment. And with this, one must put in temperance, that quality of self-control and restraint, which, as Jeremy Taylor says, is "Reason's girdle, as well as passion's bridle." With the grace of self-mastery, there is to be put into the mortar for the blending of character, the grace of patience; that quality of fortitude and endurance which enables

one to win victories by siege as well as by storm; and which gives one grace to wait. Character is proceeding finely in its process of crystallization when the stage is reached where one can calmly endure—can wait for vindications and triumphs, in confidence of their coming. But with this quality, one is to put in godliness, or a feeling of godly reverence and fellowship. With this is to go brotherly kindness, as between equals in the family—the ordinary courtesy and kindness among those who make up one's chosen world. And, last of all—grand climax of the process—there is to be “put in” the grace of charity, the grace which reaches out, which bends down, which lifts up; the grace which is broader than kinship, which bounds from affection to altruism, which expands the soul toward completer measure with the heart of Christ.

Each grace which goes before, in this seven-fold process, is incomplete without the rest, and each becomes a rarer grace by the transition wrought by the putting in of another. Graces are to go in broods if characters are to be complete.

It is by diligence in the cultivation of these personal graces that we are to gain the revelation of our acceptability to God. Along this line you are to *make sure to yourselves* the fact of calling and election. A good character is bound to help one toward an appreciation of Christ, because affinity always

helps toward understanding. Definite occupations always beget a spirit of clannishness, because each man better understands his own kind. And if it were one's lot to speak to men and women to whom clean morals and self-denying charity appeal almost with the sense of pride, one need not bid them discard these as unworthy ideals in the Christian life; for every grace of character has been marked by the sanctifying touch of Jesus; and along this way, as toward Emmaus, they may expect to meet a Person, their eyes being holden, perhaps, so that they cannot define Him as other men have done, but whose aims accord with theirs and of whom they may have cause to say: "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way?"

One's surest way to know artists is to have an artist for a friend. If one would live among musicians, one has but to know a few of them; there will be others near at hand. There is a magnetism about the pursuit of common ideals which must apply as well in the moral world. Moral qualities are affinities; and men are brought together by what they are. If men are not held apart by common tastes and by a community of aspiration—if they are not repelled by the fact of congeniality; are we to suppose that our Lord holds aloof from those who are seeking to develop the highest degree of purity in their own characters and the fullest usefulness toward the

world? The Christian who is depressed and mourning over the fact that Jesus is not present to his consciousness as a constant revelation, needs to work quite as much as he needs to pray. If he would know where he may meet the Lord—meet Him face to face—he may easily gain direction by the record of the gospels. It is at the gate of Nain; in Galilee, face to face with a leper; at the Pool of Bethesda, where lay a multitude of impotent folk, of blind and halt and withered; along the quiet ways of Palestine, where the sick and needy thronged to intercept Him with their woes; in the temple, whence He drove those who made it a commercial institution, and where He trimmed from the law of God the barnacles of professional interpretation. Let us seek Him where we know Him to have been. His footprints have been left so plainly on the earth that no man need err. And, going thither, we shall find Him, and shall know Him by the affinity of a common aim. To strive for the graces and refinements of a worthy character and to give one's self to the blessing of the world, is to put one's self in the way of meeting Him and of gaining the assurance of salvation. One may better see Christ as vision is focused by one's own good deeds.

But, perhaps, as some men say, the making of one's calling and election sure is not entirely a subjective matter—a matter of consciousness and assur-

ance. It may be also a matter of security, in the sense of clinching and completing a process whose philosophy is not plain; the making *secure* of calling and election. Even this view is practical enough to commend it to us all; that character may do for us what our failure to appreciate doctrine makes impossible. "For so"—*i. e.*, through a seven-fold development of graces, which culminate in charity and love—"an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The avenue of this ample entrance is not found in the calling and election; not in dogmatics, but in practicalities, in graces. Two ancient manuscripts, the Alexandrine and the Sinaitic, insert the words "Through your good works." It is well that it is put in this way, because so many people seem to stumble at the way things are often put. No man can stumble at the provision for the development of personal character and benevolence. These are real and tangible things. Everybody appreciates them, and everybody knows that they accord most fully with the life of Jesus.

If the heart of God was moved with love at the spectacle of His Son leading a life that was clean amid the environment of sinners and publicans, and seeking the supremest usefulness among the distresses of mankind, He must be moved with a like sympathy for every man who seeks virtue and useful-

ness. The man who cannot gain heaven by a *comprehension* of Christ may make forceful appeal through his *imitation* of Christ. Surely God does not seek to compress us all into the same mould. Our ideas differ about many things. But about one thing we are agreed, as to the excellence of every moral virtue. There is no dispute about manliness or self-control or patient endurance or generosity. About these graces the common sentiment of the world has crystallized. Our Lord exemplified them in His own character and sought to develop them in His disciples. Every one of them means *likeness to Him*. And they who stand at the Gates of the Great City—the gates that are not shut at all by day—must know, from what they see, whose is the likeness that the coming pilgrims bear. If St. Peter himself should be the keeper of the portals, the practical test which he has left ought to be a safe one to rely upon.

We ought to use all diligence to develop these graces of character; for though some of them may be natural with a few among us, they need, in the main, to be acquired. Let us put ourselves in the school of discipline, making so full and constant study of His Word that we shall be in absolute sympathy with His character, and, seeing beauty and virtue, we shall be led to reproduce them. Every man needs to do it. The one who has faith mighty enough to move mountains, if he has not the grace of charity, has a faith

that will not be the faith of rounded character. The man who cannot print his creed in capitals, but who honestly tries to do his best, to be pure and purposeful and generous, his character may be a creed in itself. Some day we shall see alike and the verities of heaven will appeal to our souls with equal force. Until then, if we be timorous and uncertain as to the outlook, let us seek peace by absorption in this work of building character for ourselves, that we may be worthy of fellowship with God, and in work for others, that they, too, may see something of the goodness of God through the gentle service of our lives; and by mastery of ourselves and mercy toward others, God grant that our entrance to His Kingdom may be abundant.

“Chisel in hand stood a sculptor boy,
With his marble block before him,
And his face lit up with a smile of joy
As an angel dream passed o’er him.
He carved the dream on the shapeless stone
With many a sharp incision:
With heaven’s own light the sculptor stood—
He had caught the ‘Angel Vision.’

“Sculptors of life are we, as we stand
With our souls uncarved before us,
Waiting the hour when at God’s command
Our life-dream passes o’er us;
If we carve it then on the yielding stone,
With many a sharp incision,
Its heavenly beauties shall be our own,
Our *lives* that ‘Angel Vision.’”

Bishop Doane.

“AND HE SPAKE PLAIN.”

“And he spake plain.”—St. Mark 7:35.



HE text is from the narrative of a miracle which gave sensory power to ears that were dull, and which loosed a tongue from its bondage of silence. What blessed reputation had come to the Man of Nazareth, that wherever He journeyed, the first thought of men and women was to bring to His notice those who suffered beyond the power of other men to heal! The faith in His power was a splendid tribute, but the confidence in His sympathy was grander tribute still. That He could heal was a great deal; that He would, was more. And so it had come to pass that at tidings of His approach, hearts began to beat more wildly, and with hope of alleviation, and feet would hurry hither and yon, to bring before Him those whose maladies had baffled other ministry. In some slight measure others, who have been inspired

by Him to undertake a mission for the blessing of mankind, have had the same sweet consciousness of helpfulness—and surely no knowledge can be more comforting to man than that his reputation for unselfish sympathy has become so established as to make his presence always the signal for distress to show itself with confidence that its very need will be an effective appeal.

He was used to thoughts of power and majesty, for He had abdicated a throne which meant vaster empire than the Caesar's, and had come with blessed convoy from the Kingdom of Infinite Glory, to begin His life at Bethlehem. And it would have been no new triumph to have awakened awe in the hearts of men by a recognition of His power; nor would it have meant much more than to have men tremble at the crash of thunder and glare of lightning, or some other exhibition of the elements in tumult. But to have sympathy recognized—here was triumph indeed.

Sympathy—have you ever looked at the derivation of the word? It compounds itself of two Greek parts which mean "with suffering." You have seen what sympathy is in a physiological sense, as a wound in one part of the body enkindles a fever in every part; or an injury to one eye communicates itself to the other. There is in sympathy always this sense of pain at another's distress, which is the surest forerunner of compassion. That is not sympathy which

merely gives a coin to a beggar as the price of relief from annoyance; there is no sense of pain in another's woe. Sympathy awakens with a pang. It is full of the pathos of pain. There is a hurt in the heart. And when compassion shows itself, as it always does where sympathy is, it has its basic element in the consciousness of communicated suffering, and one has recourse to gracious action, not only to ease another's pain, but to bring about one's own alleviation.

Sympathy, pathos, compassion—all of them have kinship in language and emotion, for in all of them is the same root of suffering. Thus is it in another place, at the grave of His friend, that we read of the Master, as He heard the lamentation of a bereaved sister of the dead: "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." And the very pathos of His suffering reveals itself in the short verse, "Jesus wept." It seems a useless exhibition of emotion, perhaps, in view of the power He was soon to exercise in calling Lazarus back to life, but He wept because that is the nature of sympathy, to feel and to suffer, and so to grasp the thorn that stings the soul, not only because another feels it, but because the sympathy of the healer makes him to feel it also.

This was the great triumph of the Saviour, that

in His walks among men He had achieved such a reputation for companionship in grief, that wherever He went, men knew they could touch His heart whenever they could give Him sight of mortal woe. Such a reputation—such consciousness of the world's ownership—means many a weary hour for any man who manifests the spirit of Jesus Christ, and there will be moments when he longs for retreat and rest, but it brings its compensation, too, in the thought that men have been able to see his soul, and that they are rating at its full worth the part of his nature in which he takes supremest comfort and which he most thanks God for having.

Along this line is to be found the cure for the maladies of men, and the solution of our sociological problems; the development of that sort of sympathy which touches the fountain of tears, which makes men groan with the communicated consciousness of poverty in spite of their own competence and comfort, and in helping them to feel another's woe, blesses them with the altruism of the Samaritan, and binds them to the care of those who feel the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." The remedy will be found in closer touch and likeness to the Christ.

In this case, the deaf and dumb man was brought to the Saviour with the appeal that He would "put His hands upon him," and we have seen the ears

opened and the tongue loosed by the magic of His touch.

A TRIBUTE TO THE HEALER.

The result was a tribute to the Healer, for the healed man "spake plain." It was no partial cure. It was so well done as to be recognized by the generous tribute of the crowd, who said: "He hath done all things well." Completeness of cure marked every miracle of Jesus, even though these were but the incidental things in connection with His greater purpose. His moral ministry had set for itself a more stupendous task, but no less complete and perfect a consummation. Every moral ministry is slow in reaching its objective, but the perfection of civilization and the evolution of spiritual manhood are the results to which His ministry pointed, and to which His principles will ultimately lead.

The work is not done, but it is going on. And its progress is plainly marked by the evolutionary epochs of history. Just as God's world came to its geologic completeness by successive upheavals, by strange submergences and repeated beginnings, until order gloried over chaos, and God saw its beauty; so the sublimer evolution of moral ideas has been going on, and is destined to continue until vice travails and diabolism is dead, and mankind measures up to the majesty of God's children.

We are dismayed sometimes by signs of disorder and proofs of depravity, but the world has traveled so far already along the line which our Lord marked out for it, that a prophecy of its perfect evolution is not half so Utopian as when His work began. Moses would be amazed at the jurisprudence of to-day. Nero would be terrified by the humane aspect of our governments. The war-gods of the centuries would have vision of the rust gathering on their steel in the death-damp of our occasional courts of arbitration. Pirates would want to go back for a voyage on the mythic waters of the Styx at knowledge that nations are under compact to protect the rights of all who sail the seas. The despots of history would choose the seclusion of the grave could they but see the transformation of empires into republics and the hedging of kings with constitutions. The ecclesiastical tyrants who put others to death for the glory of God and the sake of conformity, would be palsied by the sight of a flag like ours and the sound of so many prayers for the unity of Christendom, and would find no place for their instruments of torture and inquisition save in museums, where they might serve the single purpose of marking the progress of the spiritual liberty of mankind. One must read history to realize the march of humane ideas, the growth of paternalism in government, the prevalence of works and institutions of mercy, and the struggles every-

where for the betterment of mankind. There is a great deal yet to be done; everybody admits that. And in this universal recognition and unrest there is prophecy of progress, because, if we were satisfied, we should cease to struggle and aspire.

The moral evolution of mankind has in it the Christian motive, which means completeness in the end. Progress is constant, and it will continue to be, because the minds of so many men are wedded to lofty ideals, and every generation has its people who are born to lead to still higher achievements in civilization. The touch of Christ is on the world, and there is magic in it. It means progress. It means inspiration in the evolution of higher civic and personal ideals. It means a miraculous spiritual Presence brooding over the hearts of men and women, begetting in them a higher wisdom and a creative genius that will carry on constructive work for humanity from age to age until all is complete.

As with men in a collective sense, so with individuals; the touch of Christ means a call to moral evolution. The work is great enough in any man's life; and everywhere it is going on. We master one besetment only to find ourselves menaced by another. But in the ever-present sense of dissatisfaction with ourselves, we shall find the healthiest incentive to further efforts. We are dissatisfied because we have not reached the ideal of our Master. Is it too much

to say, that, once men realize the touch of Christ, they are never satisfied, nor can be, with low ideals or achievements? We may often seem to be, but things are seldom what they seem. A careless mien may be the shroud for discontent. And, often, as when an elastic band is stretched, the greatest distance means the greatest tension, it may be that those who seem farthest away from God and the Church, are conscious of the most subtle yearning to be home again with the blessing of pardon and the consciousness of rectitude. Our unrest and our ideals are alike tributes to the Miracle-Worker, who will be satisfied, and bids us to be satisfied, with nothing less than a triumphant spirituality which means a masterful influence in achieving the world's perfection.

A TRIBUTE TO THE HEALED.

But that this healed man "spake plain," was also a tribute to him. He was doing his best. He was giving out the best that was in him. His speech was with such clearness that it reflected credit upon the Divine Man whose touch had loosed the string of his tongue. No doubt he had many thoughts to speak which had been born in the silence. And it is doubtless true that every man upon whom the Healer's touch has come, receives power to give out some message, with such plainness and vigor that men may note the value of the ministry with which he has

been blessed. Not in a public way, always; for public speech may demand certain temperamental qualities that are lacking, and perhaps many have unnecessarily depreciated their religious experiences and underrated their spiritual value because they could not speak in public. One may be gifted with all the qualities of a successful tradesman without being an auctioneer. And so it may be that you have been ordained to the work of an everyday ministry among men who struggle with everyday temptations, and your value to the cause of God is not to be measured by a prayer-meeting talk or a sermon, but rather by the sort of speech that comes from you on ordinary occasions. Perhaps it may not be always on what men call religious topics. The question may oftener be as to whether your accent is plain enough in the matter of honesty and personal integrity; or whether it is of such unswerving accuracy as to make it as good as a bond; or whether, when the occasion comes for an exhibition of personal pique or jealousy, you measure up to the full dignity of Christian charity and make excuse for others, instead of accusation.

There can be no doubt that such speech as this is quite as influential for good in many cases as the more pious sort. Before men, as a rule, care to talk to you on religious topics, they want to know you and to be drawn to you by a feeling of confidence.

Most people know well enough that piety is not

like the flotsam which swims always on the surface—indeed, specific gravity assigns only the light things to a place at the top. It is rather like the fibre which forms the warp and woof of life.

They know, too, the truth of what has been so aptly said:

"Not a drop from the bottle that's quite full will pass.
'Tis the half empty vessel that freest emits
The water that's in it. 'Tis thus with men's wits;
Or at least with their knowledge. A man's capability
Of imparting to others a truth with facility
Is proportioned forever with painful exactness
To the portable nature, the vulgar compactness,
The minuteness in size, or the lightness in weight,
Of the truth he imparts. So, small coins circulate
More freely than large ones. A beggar asks alms,
And we fling him a sixpence, nor feel any qualms;
But if every street charity shook an investment,
Or each beggar to clothe we must strip off a vestment,
The length of the process would limit the act;
And therefore the truth that's summed up in a tract
Is most lightly dispensed."

No one need be surprised that the people in general do not talk to him about religion instead of the weather or the crops. Religion is a great deal more sacred than politics, and men have their choice of confessors. Show them first that religion has done something for you in the definiteness of your purpose to be true to what is right. Show to them, when cheap wit is current and other people's characters are being torn to pieces, that you are something like the man who was fair enough to give the porcupine credit for

having his "good points," and that your charity chooses either to say something good or nothing bad.

Indeed there are a thousand ways in which your speech, quite apart from the ordinary limits of pious dissertation, will show that you are governed by some higher principle. And, however much they may, themselves, offend, men will be drawn toward you, by the evidence that you are controlling yourself and your speech by some noble motive. They will respect you; and respect must come, before religious conversation can be tolerated. Your speech may be of such an order as to reveal the influence of Christ. There are times for a pious protest, of course. But there are also times when silence is eloquent.

Along with the "boy-preacher" fad, ought to be classed this other error, of expecting that others will listen patiently to our religious conversation before we have established a reputation. And if we are not careful to establish a good one, perhaps we had better follow the example of Moses, and wait some forty years before we begin to speak at all. Let us rid ourselves of the notion that we are only talking *for* God when we are talking *about* God.

There is a limitless range of topics which may be discussed, to the glory of God, and yet without being regarded by others as purely religious topics. They are subjects to be viewed from the high ground of Christian principle. They demand clear speech and

positive conviction. And their discussion may easily carry the assurance of some high tuition and inspiration. Perhaps each day may bring the opportunity for them. And these days—our working days—when we are busied with secular pursuits, are to bring the most splendid opportunities for clear enunciation, and to furnish measure for our religious value, and perhaps, open the way to some larger field as teachers and helpers of our race.

A CHOICE OF IDEALS.*

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."—Jeremiah 9:23, 24.



VERY general dooms himself to fruitless campaigning, unless he first formulates a plan and gives himself an object. Debaters beat the air and are prodigal of other people's time, unless they pin themselves down to definitions and focalize thought by means of theorems. A ship draws anchor at one port only to drop it in the harbor of another, and when the master calls for clearance papers, he always ex-

* First presented as a Baccalaureate Sermon at the National Cathedral School, and since revised for use in the Open Air Service.

pects to meet the question as to whither he is bound.

All the lading is conditioned upon specific destination, and no course upon the trackless ocean can be direct and economic, that is not monitored by a compass and helmed toward some certain port. Lives find their limit in ideals. Success attends the effort that is purposeful and definite. Life may often be a lottery, but it was never meant to be, when God gave it. Achievements are often consigned by us to the realm of the accidental, because we have a vision only of things external, and seldom know the struggles and the aspirations of those upon whom the laurels rest. Men achieve because they aspire. The athlete has his goal. The master puts his artistic product upon a pedestal among other masterpieces, because he has been dominated by a purpose to win the plaudits of his inexorable tutor, or to create something that shall fully satisfy his own artistic instinct, so that he may turn to it, as did the Divine Builder toward His Eden, and say that it is "very good." The man of moods and the woman of whims may accomplish something, but it is only because of some lull in the distracting influences about them, and the rapid realization of some purpose upon which their wills are bent while the mood lasts. The ideal may change, but it is an ideal until the fickle soul discards it. The output of a life depends upon loyalty to the ideal. Sometimes our ideals are changed, because

we too easily realize them; and in the effort to reach them, we rouse latent strength and discover to ourselves new powers and possibilities, and drive the stake a little beyond the limit of our first endeavor.

So ideals may grow as men grow. Probably every class that has ever gone forth from our schools has brought many surprises to its teachers in the decade or quarter century that followed graduation. Many from whom great things were expected have failed to do them, and others, who seemed indifferent and unimportant, have been awakened by a view of the great world into which they were being thrust, to a realization of the importance of living; they have resolved to disappoint the pessimistic prophecies of the class room, and looking aloft with new-born purpose to achieve, they bring back in after years to Alma Mater, a noble name. But for the ideals under whose spell we strive, there would be little that is of interest for the historiographer of alumni associations to record.

And so to-day, as we are gathered here, with the voice of the prophet as he spoke for God, let the preacher plead with you for sound and sober willing in the choice of your ideals. In what is to be your highest glory in the coming years?

I. WISDOM.—In wisdom? That is sophomoric; it belongs to the immature period of development when one fancies that he knows a lot, only be-

cause he is ignorant of the existence of the vast, vast world which is not embraced in a college curriculum. Every fact learned helps in one's mental furnishing, and serves to broaden his little world. Yet one never meets a man so learned but that some other man may offer something new. If one could only know it all, there would be more satisfaction in packing one's brain with facts, and gloating over the possession.

But the farther men go with their studies, the more they discard certain branches and confine themselves to specialties; and these are sub-divided again and again so that the students may have subjects sufficiently small to be mastered by the human mind. Carlyle has well said: "Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great, deep, sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, *magical* and more, to whomsoever will think of it." It is well to know as much as we can. It is right to *attempt* to know. To know is to save ourselves from errors, and to broaden our horizon, and make life more beautiful and sweet. To *attempt* to know is to honor God by showing an interest in the great world into which He has inducted us. But to gloat over knowledge, when the greatest

of us can master only so small a fraction of what is to be known, is folly indeed.

Knowledge is not an *end*. It is only valuable as a means. Bulwer has the thought, in "The Caxtons," when he urges: "Master books, but do not let them master you. Read to live, not live to read." Our fathers, the great men whose enduring monuments are found in the impress they have left upon and the impulse they have given to civilization, were not omnivorous readers like those whose indiscriminating taste enriches mediocre authors in modern days. They had few books, but in knowing well those few, and in taking time for thought upon their contents, they mastered them and were helped on to an intellectual stature that was augmented by their own mental exercise. This ought to be the real aim of education, which, from its etymology, is something different from making the brain a mere storage-house for information. Unless the facts we gather may stimulate mental processes of our own, or enable us to do our work in some better way, or may quicken moral impulse, we are little better than packing-boxes for the storage of an infinitesimal fraction of the world's information. We are tutored in the schools in order that we may learn how to study; not to show how much we know. There is a world of distance between a pedant and a philosopher. The one is a mental show-case. The other has learned to use

the facts he has gathered in the larger pursuits of life. Let us, then, seek some higher ideal than that of knowledge, however superior that may be to the things that are bestial and ignoble.

II. MIGHT.—But shall might be your ideal? In these days of physical culture it is well to approve the change in sentiment that no longer associates the highest degree of mental activity and spiritual poise with an emaciated body and an ascetic face. A classic face no longer needs to be pale. Robust health on the part of our young men and women is properly an object of education, because of the vigor of mind which may well be expected in association with physical strength, and because it is the duty of our schools to fit their students for the work of life. But while bodily vigor is immensely important, it would be folly to make it an end of our striving, because age, decrepitude and death are to meet us all as we journey along the years, and we want no ideal that can give but temporary satisfaction.

So also with that form of power which gives us lordship over our fellows. It has been coveted by a multitude, and has been attained by many, only to prove its utter insufficiency to satisfy. Power and position are pleasant enough, but so often they depend upon things external to us, and we cannot command them to stay. Often they bring bitter disappointment, with the jealousies they engender, and with

the reflection which sooner or later comes, that men salute the office and not the man; that they would salute with equal obsequiousness any other man who might hold it; and that there is always a crowd of flattering sycophants around a throne who are there for the absolutely single reason that they hope to get something. How often has a man of power or a woman of position longed for a sincere friendship or for frank and honest conversation! Position always commands courtiers, but you will probably find less of sincerity and honor among them than anywhere else in the world. No man ever vaults into official station without hearing from relatives and forgotten acquaintances who would never have cared to claim him but for his eminence; and from a multitude he receives disparagement and ill-will that are engendered by his inability or unwillingness to gratify their ambitions. The woman of prominence finds her entertainments criticised, her motives maligned, her real friends few, and her lot less satisfying, in most respects, than when obscurity assured her home and happiness. Power is ephemeral, too, and no one seeks it as an end, without longing for something that has no blight nor bitterness.

III. RICHES.—Shall riches be your ideal? Wealth can do a great deal in many ways to make one happy; and, as with power, it brings one a host of friends who are loyal as long as the money lasts.

It is one of the great curses of these modern days that wealth cuts so large a figure in the social world. It accomplishes so much, that it is no wonder a mass of young men and women are turned out of the way by a false sense of its importance. But it is not all-powerful. Many who have had wealth come to them suddenly, have found that there are many things it will not buy. Many men have had happiness with their wealth because it has helped them to accomplish an immense amount of good in the world. But wealth has not been their ideal. They have had a sublimer purpose than to merely enjoy what they have; and, holding their wealth in stewardship for God, they have sought a purer joy, in alleviating distress and in strengthening agencies for education or other humanitarian ends. The possession of riches, without these higher aims and habits, is not calculated to give one peace and happiness; it shrivels the soul and makes the thought of death more awful. To make it an end of our striving is unworthy of our humanity.

No, all these—wisdom, might and riches—are unfit and unworthy ideals.

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which

exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Knowledge of God is not suggested as involving ignorance of other things, nor the necessity of poverty, nor the laceration and emaciation of the body, nor the renunciation of a commanding position among men.

Knowledge of God is the perfection of wisdom. It is the sum of all holdings. It is the climax of power and might. To understand God involves not only a study of the Book which records His dealings with an ancient people and also the life in which Christ revealed Him, but also that familiarity of spiritual intercourse which puts us in vital touch with the impulses of His nature. This only is worthy of being our ideal, for we are spiritual beings, clothed awhile with material bodies, but soon to lose these earthly impedimenta and enter upon the unhampered spiritual life. We are His kinsmen, and the only engagement worthy of us is to be so in communion with Him that we may understand clearly just what He wants done in the world, and with what spirit. The other things can not satisfy us as ideals because they are material and temporary; and only the highest ideal can satisfy our spiritual natures. It is the manner of some to think that to be spiritual and godly is to unfit one for a congenial and useful

life in the midst of these material surroundings. But that is a very narrow view. It is "*in the earth*" that God delights to "exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness;" and it is in the earth that His children are to prosecute their beneficent mission. The highest degree of spirituality must, then, be consistent with the most practical usefulness on earth.

A MESSAGE TO WOMEN.

At this center of our national life, whither the people come from all the states, and where the standards of society have such potent influence in fixing the ideals of national character, I am minded to speak a special message to our women.

In this age we may say that, in a particular sense, this is woman's world. There have been epochs in the world's history when woman was of very slight importance. Before Christ came she was ignored in the religious sphere and as a social factor she ranked as nothing. Her night was blackest when His star stood in the Eastern sky. What she has to-day she owes to Him, for it was His hands by which her shackles were stricken off, and it has been by the sublimity of His teachings that she has come to her high estate. And it has come to pass that, as she has gradually approached the point of commanding influence for which God destined her, she has helped to soothe and sweeten the world. So that to-day there

is only one thing greater than being a man; and that is to be the mother of man, or to be in such relation to him that she wields the scepter over him. Whether woman ever receives the right of suffrage or not, it is a fact that she already has ability to control man's suffrage in every point that claims her interest. Her power in the creation of moral sentiment is supreme. Men do not want her to take on any taint or semblance of masculinity, for they know full well that she cannot do it save by descent. They want her to be religious, however far from it they themselves may be. They want her to retain her hold upon the spiritual world, that she may be a link between them and God. In the social evolution of these nineteen hundred years, woman has come to a mighty kingdom. Her scepter is imperial; her love is law. God grant that she may never abdicate her throne. At her knee the coming man learns first the attitude and words of prayer. By her side he receives the impress of those tender qualities that have outlived the years of her enslavement. At her bidding he goes forth to strive. In her name he girds himself for battle. For her sake he bears himself bravely. And, as we have seen, alas, too many times, when the bullets find him and he falls, it is with her letters in his pocket and her image next his heart.

Let any great question appeal to the women of our land, and it is taken at once from the arena of

partisan strife and carried, because they will it. Talk of the man behind the gun, but do not forget the one whose love gives him grit to stay there. Count the ballots of the men, but remember that there is a factor to be reckoned with in the enlightened conscience of our women, that can withstand all the oratory of partisans and seal the fate of any proposition whenever they become aroused. Such is woman's divine prestige. Such is her invincible power. But with privilege so vast there is responsibility to God, that this power shall be used for the noblest ends. It is the mission of the services and the schools of the Church to give to our women and to our men as well an enlightened conscience; to deepen in them the sense of obligation; to conserve and develop the spiritual sense; to enkindle the fire of an ardent and lofty patriotism; to send them forth, not merely to adorn a drawing-room, to ornament a home or to fill a line in the "Social Register," but consecrated to an ideal that means the uplifting of our race.


If our social standards are to be corrected, woman must set the pace. If our ideals are unworthy of us, woman must supplant them with the true. She has the power to be our curse or cure. God grant her that sublime achievement, that having first become

a Madonna to give Christ to men, she may at last complete the majestic oblation, and by the uplift of her spiritual nature, present mankind to Christ.

FAITH: ITS VALUE, ITS TEST AND ITS TRIUMPH.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 Peter 1: 7.

THE VALUE OF FAITH.

N one point the text is at variance with the opinions of a certain class of people. It asserts that faith has a value—a superior value—being more precious than gold. There are those who would have us believe otherwise. To them, faith is foolishness, and they would like to have other people give it up. It is difficult to discover any foundation for the ethics of depreciation, or how a man can arrogate to himself the impertinent right to be the self-appointed assessor of the value of what other people have. There

are busybodies of that sort, who seem to be consumed with fear that somebody may err in unduly appreciating what he may have; and their happiness seems to depend upon showing that the thing is not worth so much. Whose business is it, if the real value is not up to the valuation, so long as the owner does not want to sell? Suppose he has overrated its worth, shall his happiness over inflated wealth be destroyed in a spirit of ruthless iconoclasm and a desire to deprive him of what he thought he had? There are bigger and better things to do than that, whether the possession is in the line of realty or of faith.

Men are not always reasonable enough to consider that the matter of appraisement may often depend upon the point of view. No man assents to the appraisement of his household gods by a vendor of second-hand furniture without a protest. Whence they came, what they cost, and what associations and heritage may hallow them; these are factors in the owner's estimation. It is not always possible to have a fixed and unyielding measure of value, nor is it fair for another to assert his impertinent appraisement, when the owner knows best what the object is worth to him.

In the realm of trade, the buyer who finds fault in order to depreciate values is the victim of a very unpleasant epithet, and it is difficult to see that the people who strive so hard to scale down the value

which other people put upon their faith are any less despicable.

With faith, as with many things beside, one does not always know what it is worth until one has lost it. And with loss of faith, as with other serious losses, one may have no hope of recovery and there is often a sense of real impoverishment. We know, who have talked with some of them, that the cry often goes up from hearts whence faith has vanished:

"Oh give me back a world of life;
 Something to love and trust;
 Something to quench my inward strife,
 And lift me from the dust.

* * * *

"Better the instinct of the brute
 That feels its God afar,
 Than reason to his praises mute,
 Talking with every star.
 Better is childhood's thoughtless trust
 Than manhood's daring scorn;
 The fear that creeps along the dust
 Than doubt in hearts forlorn."

In other things we credit as expert testimony the statement of those who have tested in daily use the thing which they commend; why not in this? Men constantly possess themselves of new appliances upon the testimony of those who have found life easier because of them. May not faith require the same sort of expert testimony in order to achieve its proper valuation? It would seem that the best peo-

ple to assess that valuation are those who have had faith, rather than those who have it not.

With those who know, there is no dispute over St. Peter's appraisal; it is "more precious than gold." It is more than an ornament, like the cross which adds a pendant beauty to those who wear it; and yet faith has its aesthetic mission in making many a life more beautiful and attractive than it would have been without such adornment. Faith is a beautifier. It is a foe to wrinkles; and though there is a rigorous physical law by which wrinkles cannot well be banished from the earth, there is no doubt that faith has done more to make the eye bright and the features placid and comely than all else. So potent is its ministry in this regard, that sculpture has idealized it, and the painter has often sought to capture its poise and serenity for the picture through which his genius seeks immortality. You know what we mean. Faith takes hold of many a life that is crude, and chisels toward the ideal. It may be the task of many years; but every stroke makes for beauty. When Faith's own features are reproduced, the figure is robust and the face is strong and magnetic.

Each emotion has its own peculiar cast of face; pain, suspense, fear, guilt, appeal. And you do not need to be told that faith has begun its work upon features like all of these, and has beautified them

with its own peculiar touch; so that it has this value of adornment.

But what it does for one's features is only incidental to the work that is wrought in the soul. The face merely advertises the feelings, and what is seen there is only the symptom of the spiritual state. Stoicism has often preached its gospel of unconcern and steeled the heart with indifference as to what may happen.

Faith, too, has its difficulties to face—difficulties which need to be endured—and it preaches its gospel of resignation, and introduces a positive element into the process, which makes it utterly different from stoical endurance. The very letters of its name spell out fearlessness, aspiration, inspiration, trust, and hope. If I had to choose, as the legacy to a child, between faith and fortune, I should write faith, without a moment's hesitation, because it would furnish aid in experiences in which other fortune would be powerless. I should dislike to put a child in possession of a fortune, without the spiritual power to master it; because, while gold will buy, it will often tempt and blight; and it is infinitely better to lead a child to stake his influence and success upon what he is, rather than what he has.

They are the masters of human destiny, not who equip an army, but who lead it. And herein lies an added value for faith, not only in enabling one to

take life as it comes and make the best of it and the most of it, as if God meant it to be so, but also in giving to those who have it the power of mastery and leadership. The man who is not to be swerved from loyalty to his ideal by seeming disaster, but who has the same fire in the eye and flint in the face, is the man to make heroes out of other men who want to do right but do not know how to lead.

Faith is not a thing to be apologized for. Fix that in your minds. Nor is it a womanly quality, if by womanly you mean anything approaching weakness or effeminacy. If you bear in mind that the strongest characters of history have been its women—strongest in their endurance of suffering, strongest in their stimulation of heroism, strongest in the inspiration of fear in masculine hearts to do that which is cowardly or ignoble—then you may call faith a womanly quality, and you may profitably emulate such ardor in behalf of a principle that can make the physically weak the moral leaders of the world. An attribute that can so invigorate a man and so vastly augment his power among his fellows is worthy of possession.

THE TEST OF FAITH.

But St. Peter has something to suggest about the trial of faith, and he likens this process to the purification of gold, which reaches its perfection by severity of treatment. Modern times are but little

like the apostolic in their menace to Christian living. Martyrdom is not to be thought of in many places. But every life has its times when faith is brought to a test. So often our plans go awry and we are tempted to feel that we could have done better if we had had the management. Perhaps we might, for the moment and for the individual; or, perhaps it is better to say, if the moment and the individual were alone considered the plans would often have been different. Often the thing which happens seems cruel and disastrous, and the most facile Christian, in his ingenious devising of excuses, cannot frame a plausible reason for what is done. And, just as often, faith is put to the test. It would not be faith if we could see it all, or if we could pay the spiritualistic medium to write it all out for us. And, by the way, one would think that the mediums would suggest to their "spirits" that they learn to spell.

No, it is when things go wrong, and we can hear no voice nor suggest an explanation, that we need faith to make us firm in reliance upon the wisdom and the goodness of God. That such things happen is not the melancholy discovery of a few lives; it is universal experience. Often the developments of later years bring solution for many of these perplexing problems and we are quite willing to leave them as Providence first appointed them. But the little demon of selfish desire within us, keeps always ask-

ing why these occurrences should come. Nobody can say why. And the question always is as to whether faith is strong enough to hold us to our spiritual moorings, and enable us to believe that God's hand is on the helm of the craft, and that the future will vindicate His wisdom and His love. To come from these experiences with an unshaken faith is to come with a stronger faith.

But why is faith subjected to these trials, rather than some other virtue? Simply because faith stands sentinel over other virtues, and to destroy it is to weaken them. Despair and degeneracy go hand in hand. Break down faith and it is easy for the soul to go wrong; there is no chart, no compass, no motive. But when faith conquers in the moment of untoward happenings, she brings under shelter of her strong arms the other virtues, and the life, though it may be subdued and chastened, is blessed with the serenity of a new confidence in God.

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

In everything else, men willingly take the test in order to enjoy the victory. Indeed the very idea of a test involves the possibility of a triumph. No contest is pleasant in itself, but the thought of success overshadows all discomfort. It is the merciful compensation for every test of faith, that there is a vic-

tory to be won, and that if a man bears himself bravely, he is bound to be stronger afterward.

In so many ways we endure because we are lured by the prize. Much study means a weariness of the flesh. Many years are consumed, ordinarily, in the training of the mind to such habits of study, that mental work itself becomes delightful. The earlier years are periods in which people hold themselves by all sorts of uncomfortable methods for training the mind and subjugating the will, to memory and mental exercise. The work is worth while because the privilege of knowledge is a beacon before them. To know more and to be worth more, will compensate for all toil and discomfort.

The same compensation attaches to age. Nobody faces its approach with perfect calmness. There is always pathos in the appearance of gray hairs, and nobody sees a wrinkle in the mirror with absolute unconcern. But when one stops to consider it, age is in possession of its own peculiar power. Young men may thrill because theirs is the might for war, but old men may rejoice that, having already doffed their dented armor, theirs is the mission of counsel. It is worth all the ravages of age and the blasts of experience, when the youth—whose stock in trade is only theories—is ignored, and those in need of counsel seek the people who have fought their way through fire and smoke and have a story to tell that helps

other men in meeting trouble. There is always this value in discipline, that it enables one to achieve vaster empire over the lives of men.

The experience in Arizona by which a cavalry regiment was led to *adopt* a chaplain as "their own" may be worth a reference. The "sky pilot," as they called him, was subjected to a test, and it was made severe enough to satisfy them as to whether he was as much of a man as they were. A hundred and twenty-five miles of horseback riding in two days, over the roughest of mountain trails—eighty miles of it the first day—to reach a distant post, was no pleasant prospect for either these veterans or the clerical recruit. And almost utter physical exhaustion, attendant upon the effort, was no delightful realization for one who was *learning* to ride. But there is a power in pride. One is sometimes ashamed to fail. Grit is often worth as much as grace, and to be recognized as a soldier by men who knew the hardness of it, was worth all the pain of these two days. The recognition of his ability to meet their own hard tests, by men who had themselves endured, was in the end a triumph full of compensation; aye, it was a thing to be coveted. Life was brighter for him after that—the ability to match their endurance led not only to comradeship with them but conquest of them—and it is easy to understand how, sometimes, in life's larger undertakings, a man may kiss the rod

that smites him, because he may rise from his knees to be known as a knight.

It may not be always the case that one would willingly undergo the trials of life for the satisfaction of triumph; perhaps few possess such constancy of courage as to be always ready for a test. But, given the proving of faith, the compensation is bound to come. It is not so easy to look forward, both to the trial and to the triumph. But, once the trial is over, it is rare satisfaction to feel that it can be turned to good account in the enrichment of one's experience, the added confidence of others, and the praise of Him whom faith enshrines. One does not covet tears, but when they are shed, it is worth something to feel, as another has said, that "The heart could have no rainbows, had the eyes no tears."

There is no doubt that—as the experiences of life develop capacity for other enjoyments or emotions which otherwise would be unintelligible—so the trials which come to us will develop capacity for the appreciation of some phase of heavenly life which otherwise we might never know. And it will be as tried and trusted soldiers we shall go into the presence of the Great Captain. You realize what that must mean, and what praise and honor and glory are involved in His recognition of those who have been tested in the great campaign of life. In the flush of a triumphant faith there will be compensation, as

one's own heart registers its victory. And in the "Come ye blessed" of the Conqueror—in the comradeship of the Great Veteran of all moral striving—will be satisfaction big and full enough to make a heaven for every soul who has "so passed through things temporal as not to lose the things eternal."

HE THY VOICE, AND THOU TO HIM AS GOD.

"And it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God."—Exodus 4:16. (Revised Version.)



MOSES had been called of God to the leadership and deliverance of Israel. It was one of those offices which in modern days would be called an "empty honor," and the nominee would be referred to as the leader of a "forlorn hope." Israel was so spiritless and subdued as not to be even a factor in Egyptian politics, and the "Jewish vote" did not cost Pharaoh any sleepless nights. Politics was an unknown art. The people were too busy making bricks to think of "making slates," and so the office was without a candidate. Even Moses did not want it.

The time was ripe enough for revolution to have suited a Servian, or to have given congenial occupation to a Central American, but revolutions had not

grown to be popular. To us, with a mass of political upheavals staring at us from the pages of history, it seems to have been an ideal time for some consecrated man to sound a clarion note and bid the people rally to the standard of righteousness and justice. What a time it would have been for Garibaldi! What a time for Joan of Arc! What a time for Patrick Henry! Governments like Egypt, though they may flourish for a season, are doomed, in modern times, if not to extinction, at least to modification, so that they shall come more nearly into line with the progress of civilization, which is only another way of saying, with the will of God and the good of men.

There have been a good many cases since the time of Moses, in which a good man has declined to go into political life, and the hesitation has probably been as hostile to the purposes of God. What Jefferson Davis wrote for a Northern boy is as true as if uttered by inspiration: "Man is not born for himself alone, nor for his family only, but for his country also." Politics need not be bad, and if it becomes so in sporadic cases, it is because good men, in deplorable recreancy to a high civic responsibility, prefer to leave it severely alone. A man is wasting time who tells us that politics is "rotten to the core." In the first place it is not so bad as that, and in the second place, if it were, the task of purification is not half as hard as the work of our people in chasing the

death-dealing mosquito out of Cuba, or driving the flies and infection from our typhoid-ridden camps. It can be done when good men exert themselves. But it never will be done, if good men shirk responsibility and commit the perpetuity of patriotism to demagogues and illiterates, no matter what their character may be.

Government must rest upon somebody's shoulders, and Christ taught His people to be true to it. The baser elements will always seek control, and that they ever get it should shock the civic conscience of the men who have worthy ideals, but will not get down into the arena and clash swords for them.

Nor does Moses stand alone in history, in declining to accept an office. There are always plenty of candidates, it is true. And so, if defective vision has led you to an oculist, you will find that his case is full of lenses, but they are not all for you. Straight vision depends upon careful choice. If any man in official station fits it no more closely than the clapper fits the bell, it is not because the country suffers from paucity of good material. It is because bigger men either scorn the trust, or fail to get together in the interest of other bigger men for the common weal.

But the difficulty in the mind of Moses related to his lack of fitness, and he was troubled with what has been seen in some other men—an overweening fear of his constituents. He had not risen to the rank

of a statesman, so that he would rather be right than be Regent, and would keep in line with conscience and God, and leave the constituents to discover the genius of his statesmanship for themselves.

We shall not go over the argument by which he seeks release from leadership and God imposes it upon him. He imagines that success depends upon oratory—having never learned that the less a man says the more he often is credited with knowing. And he forgets that the sublimest oratory is born of high purpose and righteous cause.

But Pharaoh is to be dared, and Israel is to be consolidated and unified, and the work is so appallingly vast that he fails in confidence in his ability to do it.

The men who picture God as immovable, and lacking in willingness to adapt Himself to the needs of His children, may find here a lesson, as He yields to the timidity of Moses, and plans to supplement his weakness by the ministry of Aaron. Aaron must have been more voluble and more gifted in some ways than his brother, but he was more demagogue than statesman, and lacked the character needed in the nationalization of Israel. But God makes use of him for his brother's sake, and says of him to Moses: "And it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God."

COMPLEMENTAL LIFE.

Here is a lesson as to the blessing of complementary life. We are not the same. Our qualities differentiate us, quite as much as the variation of face and figure. Each of us is the product of the centuries, but the thing we call heredity has flitted about, like a bee, along the ages, touching at characteristics here and there that have come to us from various ancestors, and left us so that none of us can exactly counterpart the other, nor take his place. We are not meant to take another's place, for that would leave a useless factor in the world. Personality involves a place—a specific and definite place—for which character fits.

We are all composites of the centuries, if you please, but no composites are the same if the groups you photograph are different. Each man who comes into the picture changes it to the extent of emphasizing some feature or modifying some outline.

The Angel of Death gathers from hearthstones here and there, and the world endures, but it is never the same from day to day, because death, and the emergence of character from infancy, ever adds to or detracts peculiar characteristics from the sum total of human personality.

That we are what we are, brings obligation to be just that to others. The poet and the philosopher

need each other, and each must hamper the other into some semblance of practicalness. The enthusiast finds not only his antithesis, but also his complement, in the phlegmatic person, and the good of society brings them together, one to keep the other from sailing off on wild vagaries and living on the film of day dreams, and he, in turn, to save the other from the curse of petrefaction and a failure to see the beauties of God's Universe. The singer lifts his brother from the shrieks and smells of a distracting mart, and leaves him some sweet strains to lighten toil as he plods along his more prosaic path, but the tradesman is needed to "pay the piper." The multitude may need the orator to voice the thoughts and feelings which they have had but could not utter, but the orator needs the flashing eyes and ears attent, to magnetize him and loose the torrent of his speech.)

(Temerity and timidity, antipodes are they, and yet complements. For the timid man may hold his foolhardy brother back from rash and ruthless sacrifice—from martyrdom when martyrs are not needed—and the daring man may impart to his fearful fellow such measure of his own spirit as will make of him a martyr when martyrdom is the price of righteousness and honor.)

The Calvinistic temperament needs its Arminian or Methodist complement, and it will not hurt them at all to be in the same church, as we have them; for

one will keep the other from despairing and doubt, and will be kept at work by him in spiritual exercise. The Ritualist will keep the Low Churchman from any tendency to slovenliness and disorder, and will be saved by him from a dead and unspiritual ceremonialism.

Love is but the voice of the soul, calling for a complemental life. Men want what they are not. No normal man ever seeks the hand of woman unless she is better than he, and can add something to his life. And marital difficulties are always hard to adjust until people recognize their temperamental differences. When this is done the work of adaptation and modification begins, and each becomes more like the other, even in appearance, as time goes on. And so the illustrations might multiply.

An isolated life means warp and eccentricity. Each life needs other lives; for every one of us, put here for training and for fulfilment of the purposes of God, needs modification by the moral influence of others in order to evolve a nobler character and achieve a higher destiny.

Many people, influential for good, are not conscious of the fact that they are of great value to others, and that other people govern their expressions and modify their conduct in accordance with the inspiration of admiration. Influence is so like that mighty force of magnetism, which flashes with a

blinding glare but seldom, and oftener thrills in silence and unseen throughout the avenues of personal contact.

One does not need to be like, in order to be congenial, because—always wanting to be what we are not—we often get our greatest good from those we least resemble. And so, amid this great jumble of complex and diversified humanity, a moral evolution is going on, and mankind grows less chaotic and primeval, and takes upon itself the virtues which have been shown in their fulness in but one historic character, but which God ordains you and me to help each other in perfecting.

Complemental characters are needed for coöperative work. Moses could not speak, and Aaron could not inspire. But God found a place for both.

We cannot tell how it may have been, but it would not have been surprising if many of the people had looked upon the position of Aaron as superior to the other, because he was gifted in speech and was always in evidence, as the spokesman, upon public occasions.

But that was not the only case in which there was "a power behind the throne." Many a man has gotten the germ of a sermon from his wife—or some other into whose keeping God has given him—in some high thought or gentle action, and it has stirred the force of his intellect until he has uttered it in his own way. The voice has been his, but not the inspiration.

Credit goes where it belongs, in the long run. Aaron had only to be left alone with Israel for a little time while Moses was on the Mount, to make it apparent whence came the moral force in Hebrew statecraft. Instead of creating moral sentiment and breasting the wave of popular folly, he yielded, and made them a golden calf to worship. He may have had some misgiving that Moses would be angry—and we shall give him credit for regret that Israel had made so foolish a choice—but he did not feel that he dared to stand out against what the people wanted. What was his voice, that it should still the tumult of universal clamor? How could anybody expect that his personal prejudice would outweigh the expression of a national demand?

He was to learn, when the leader returned, the invincible power of a moral principle, and how one man can move a nation, *if he is right*.

And therein comes the meaning of that strong expression of the text, that Moses was appointed to be “as God” to Aaron. Not to hold the keys of heaven; to bid or to bar. But to be firm in what God taught him, and to be omnipotent, because he was right.

In a more limited sphere, it may be, that is the privilege of all of us, in relation to some other. Indeed, may it not be that the great forces which make

most mightily for the world's redemption, do not originate with those who are most seen and heard in great enterprises? Any man can be brave in meeting antagonistic forces if only he realizes that he is the spokesman of a party. His courage is the concentrated courage of the crowd. It takes a braver man, without a party to support him, to stand as the exponent of a principle. But the man who does that, will win a larger and larger following, by the contagion of his own moral courage, and so will bring about a clamor for the right which often makes the voice of the people as the voice of God. You have read that verse in the dome of the Congressional Library: "As one lamp lights another nor grows less, so nobleness enkindleth nobleness."

And so, by the force of moral ideas, and by tactful adherence to the right, you may be as God to others. You may develop a moral sense in them. You may strengthen stamina. You may furnish inspiration. Vocalization may not be your forte; publicity may be distasteful. Your work in life may be along other lines. But no lot ever falls to any of us, by which we are debarred from being forces in making others strong. We may buttress those who are foremost in great undertakings. They may need us, lest they grow weary and discouraged with constant battles. Their victory is ours if we help them

to win it. We may set many a force in motion, which will project others upon a career of high endeavor.

Ours is a high call and a noble cause. And if we are to stand "as Gods" behind other lives, it will be by our dedication to God's service, and our devotion always to such things as will please Him and lead to the upbuilding of our race.

There is a bit of graceful tribute in the words of the poet who brings face to face two lives that have served as mutual buttress through the stress and strife of years:

"She spoke of herself: how, apart
And unseen—far away—she had watch'd, year by year,
With how many a blessing, how many a tear,
And how many a prayer, every stage in the strife;
Guess'd the thought in the deed: traced the love in the life:
Bless'd the man in the man's work!
'Thy work . . . oh not mine!
Thine, Lucile!' . . . he exclaimed. . . . 'All the
worth of it thine
If worth there be in it!'"

The future may reveal—if the present does not know—that lives are interlocked, and that the credit of daring and of doing belongs far more to the source whence stimulation came, than to the man whom the people honored. Men deck with laurel the hero who has striven in their sight, but a crown more fadeless must belong to the one who "stands and waits," in the silence inspiring an otherwise common man with fear to fail.

To one is given the joy of interpreting another's life; to the other belongs the honor of bidding forth to serve; and to both, in grateful measure, must come the blessing of Him in whose common cause they strive.

SECRET DISCIPLESHIP.

"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover? And He said, 'Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples.'"—St. Matthew 26:17-19.



HERE is suggestiveness in the very vagueness of the Master's expression: "Go into the city to such a man." It would seem that St. Matthew deemed it unnecessary, if he knew, to record the man's name; and it may be that they had all become accustomed to these revelations from Jesus, concerning disciples hitherto unknown to them. The fact doubtless is, that here was a man in the city who had been influenced by this Divine ministry and yet was not enrolled among the more active, public workers, such as we commonly designate as disciples. So thorough was this influence that Christ deemed it quite suffi-

cient to send the simple message, "The Master saith, I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples;" and the committee of arrangements that waited upon this unnamed disciple found it quite sufficient, and made ready the feast in the appointed dwelling.

Deny the fact of this man's discipleship, and you will find it hard to account for his ready yielding to the plans of Jesus, especially when they involved the possession of his house by a band of perfect strangers. His acquiescence sufficiently marks him as a man acquainted with our Lord, and willing to serve Him.

Once before, in our study of St. Matthew's record of this Divine life, we have come into contact with this same idea. It was at the time when preparations were making for the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. At that time He sent two of His disciples into an adjoining village to get two beasts of burden, with the simple direction, "If any man say aught to you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them." This marks another of the conquests He had made, and such as, no doubt, He was daily making. The owner may not have confessed his faith before men; neither, perhaps, did he possess a clear conception of our Lord's Divinity; but he had been won over to confidence in Christ, and so complete was this confidence that he would entrust his property to the Master's

care. Christ knew enough of the man to fear no repulse, and patiently tarried till the apostles should introduce themselves to the unknown convert and receive proof of his discipleship.

The evangelists, in recording these things, exhibited no surprise, and they had doubtless ceased to be surprised at finding disciples of whom they had no previous knowledge.

We go forth in the springtime, when vegetation cleaves the earth and flowers turn their faces toward the sun, and we find fragrant blossoms on every side, where no human hand had sown the seed. And walking the same familiar path, we may each day see some new blossom that we had not found before. So it must have been with the disciples, as they circled the sea and threaded through the hill-country once made sacred by the presence of Christ; they found spiritual harvests where they had sown no seed, and in fields where they were not always expecting to find them. What was the cause? The great Sower had been there before them, or some wind-wafted seed had lodged in a heart that gladly gave it place. In other words their Lord had made secret conquests that they knew not of.

Is not this the meaning of that incident, which finds St. John, as the spokesman of displeased disci-

ples, in the presence of Jesus, exhibiting the basest sort of sectarian feelings; where the disciples in their tours had met a man who was doing precisely the same sort of work that they were doing—casting out devils in the name of Jesus? They had heard nothing of his discipleship and he knew nothing of theirs; hence each party repudiated the other. Because he was not their convert, the disciples were distrustful of him. And, careless of the fact that he did his work well and was loyal to Jesus in the exorcism of demons, they carried the case to Christ for judgment: “Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.” But Jesus recognized his discipleship, and gave this royal answer: “Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me: For he that is not against us is on our part.” Indeed, He goes beyond this, and makes a statement so broad that we often forget it, in our application of the tests of discipleship. Note His very words; then ponder them in your hearts and see if they do not mean that our tests may sometimes be too severe and that they whom we pass by without a word of Christian recognition may, after all, be *secret* disciples of Him whose name we deny them the right to use: “Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My

name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

Happy are those words of Faber:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea,
There's a kindness in His justice
Which is more than liberty.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

"But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own."

There is comfort in this thought, when we become weary in Christ's service, and fancy that there are no results save such as we see. Our Lord has many a disciple whose name was never found on any of these records of the earth; and many souls, perhaps, for whose salvation we have labored, treasure feelings for Jesus, though unconfessed to us, which prevent them from being His foes. No teacher can tell all he has done for Christ and humanity. There will be surprises all along the way, and surprises at the end. God will bring before the earnest worker many a life cheered and saved, concerning which the surprised disciple will ask: "When was this done?" Do not give up the case that has weighted down your

heart. Nicodemus seemed an interested seeker when he came to Jesus by night in the earliest days of Christ's ministry, but the gospel fails to record his name but once again till the Sanhedrim has plotted the crucifixion. Of Joseph of Arimathea, another secret disciple, we have heard nothing, until he makes bold to do what no other disciple would; beseeching Pilate for the body of Jesus that he might give it loving burial. Many men, in a desperate struggle for orthodoxy, fall into Elijah's despondency, and fancy themselves almost alone in the defence of truth, but if granted a revelation of facts by the Lord, they would find, as did the despondent prophet, that there are thousands who never yet have bowed the knee to Baal. Let us be glad that God keeps the numbers and the names, and that He "knoweth them that are His." Let us be glad, too, for the possibility of secret discipleships all along the way, because it will keep us from judging all things merely by what we see, and will give new force to the warning: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good."

God's Kingdom is bigger than all the sects. When the hour comes for our passage from this world, we shall go straight to Him who best knows whether the impulses of a human heart are those of friend or foe.

Earthly tests have value, and churchly praise and censure are necessary as police measures in the moral world, but no man who is unable to subscribe to an elaborated creed and yet who is at heart in sympathy with the aims of Jesus, ought to accept the dictum of another person as to his Christianity. Men have been burned for heresy and sent out from this world with the anathemas of an intolerant and misguided people, but by the spirit of our blessed gospel, we know that the brows of some of them are diademed with symbols of Divine regality.

Perhaps the experience of some of us has been unusual, in bringing us into touch with so many people of good mind and noble character who have been regarded by others and have considered themselves as being utterly out of sympathy with the creeds and aims of Christian bodies. So often has this been the case, and such genuine friendships have we formed among them, that we have an almost instinctive attachment for any true man who is outside the Church and who unfortunately thinks that he belongs outside. Many of these men have been bewildered by the smoke of the polemic strife between denominations, and find it hard to get their bearings. They have noted the insistence with which man's definition of God's doctrine has been urged upon those who seek membership in Christian bodies—definitions which they cannot always accept without

stultifying themselves—that they have come to look upon themselves as heretics and outlaws, and fancy that Christianity is not so much an attempt to reproduce the Divine life in men as it is a propaganda of casuistry and dogmatism. Two things are often true; that Christians do not understand them and they do not understand themselves.

On one occasion it became possible to test this matter in a theatre where a very wholesome little play was in progress. In several scenes there were Church members who whittled away with the dogmatic penknife till they brought questions of creed down to a point of utmost fineness, but whose lives were marked by most glaring inconsistency. So general was the feeling of revulsion against these quibbling credalists, that whenever a rebuke or an insult was hurled at them, a multitude in the audience vented their feelings in loud applause. At first, every hand-clap had a sting in it, because it seemed intended for a condemnation of Christianity. But, later on, it was seen that the very same hands were used to applaud every manly action, every noble trait, every heroic sacrifice; everything, in short, like the outcropping of that spirit of robust manliness which it is the mission of Christ to develop in us all. And one could not help wishing that these people—good people they must have been in their way, to so applaud goodness—might understand themselves. One

could but pity them, as one pities the child which mars its own face in its delirium of pain.

It would be a blessed mission for us, could we but rid them of their misunderstanding and bring them into touch with man's most patient listener and most tender sympathizer. If they could but know that He, too, hated hypocrisy, and that He was always shocking the sense of propriety of the merely professional religionist by His friendship for all men who had good in them, regardless of their professions, they would not feel out of sympathy with Him. They are worshipping an ideal. Alas, that they do not know that this ideal has long since realized itself in the Incarnate Christ!

May it not be an important part of our ministry of reconciliation to go to them bearing, as much as we may, the atmosphere of our Lord's tactfulness and tolerance, and say: "Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you?" In spirit we find many of them upon Mars Hill. They have erected their altar to the "Unknown God"—that ideal of goodness who loves honesty and honor; who hates casuistry and cant; who has a blessing for the marriage and a message for the mart; who teaches mathematics in the counting-house and inspires Psalms or binds whip-cords, for praise or purification in the Church. This unknown God, whom they follow with the blind impulse of goodly instincts, is Christ, the Lord; not

always the Christ of theological definition, but the Christ who came from God, who revealed God's heart and showed God's features, and by His sublime sacrifice made the cross a magnet for the world.

We may look upon many of them as secret disciples. If Jesus should come, they would know Him. They might not search, like some of us, for the nail prints and the gash of a Roman spear and the scars stung into His brow by the crown of thorns, but they would look Him straight in the eye; there would be a flash of gladsome recognition, and on bended knee and with rapturous face, they would whisper, like the rest of us, the Shibboleth of redemption: "My Lord and my God."

Your preacher of to-day has not always been a member of this dear Church of ours. Reared in another body, he was for awhile one of its ministers. But it was painful sometimes in those days to be compelled to insist upon so extensive a creed as a requisite for membership. It often seemed like asking for a graduation thesis on the day of matriculation. And it is difficult to tell you with what joy this Church was found, after a long period of study and perplexity; a Church than which no other can be more loyal to the teaching of our Lord, nor more liberal in its toleration of varying opinions in relation to that wide range of topics which we hold to be legitimately speculative.

Among the communicants of this Church you will find the greatest variations in ritual, and very wide divergences in doctrine. But the credal platform upon which we stand is so broad that all these are tolerated, because salvation does not depend upon them. And many of these secret disciples, who find themselves shut out elsewhere by the impossibility of accepting the more exhaustive creeds of other bodies, may find a welcome here, if only they come with a spirit of loyalty to our Lord. No other body can appeal so confidently to the great mass of thinking men and women who are repelled by cant; who do not respond to emotionalism; and whose creed has narrowed down to an avowal of these things upon which Christ insisted.

May we not appeal to you to come with us? To leave this secret following of an ideal? And to join with us in an effort to carry out the practical teachings of our Lord's blessed gospel? You are not against Him. Are you not "on His part"? There are blessings in the Church for you. Here your faculties will be quickened, your doubts dissolved, your definitions made complete, your souls fed, and you may find help to do His work for your brother man.

We do not plead for lawlessness and anarchy among the ministers of Christ, nor for less of faith in faith's essentials, but for an effort to meet a growingly important problem with something of our Mas-

ter's own spirit. It is so easy to be dogmatic. It is so easy to misrepresent Him. Multitudes of men are thinking of Him, and they want nothing of a Church that does not reproduce His life, nor of a ministry which does not manifest the breadth of His tolerance and the sweetness of His spirit. It is easy enough to repel them; but we are set apart *to win*. All study and all efforts at efficiency are well worth while; for, to win to a rational faith these groping worshippers of an ideal which they fancy idealistic and unreal, is to discover Christ to those for whom He died and for whose illumination He confidently waits. With Longfellow we may find comfort in the thought that:

"In all ages
Every human heart is human;
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not;
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Reach God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

HINTS OF GOD IN THE HEART OF MAN.

"And He spake this parable unto them, saying, 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.'—St. Luke 15:3-7.

CHRIST'S "ARGUMENTUM AD HOMINEM."



THE fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel is one of the gems of revelation. It was designed as a revelation by Him who uttered it, and it *was* a revelation, not only to the murmuring Scribes and Pharisees who were critics of the customs of Jesus, but to many others whose judgment was warped by a false theology, and who denied to the Divine Being all attributes akin to human charity. St. Luke has given us

here three parables with a single purpose. For in these stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost boy—all of them sweetly and tenderly told—one climax is reached and one impression sought, to correct an erring estimate of God.

One of the most striking things about the whole discourse is that our Lord uses the *argumentum ad hominem*; that His argument for certain aspects of the character of God is an appeal, first of all, to what we already know of ourselves along similar lines. It is the sort of argument some of us need to-day; for, in the effort of many minds to conceive of one who must be more than human, in order to be a God, they have constructed something which is inhuman. Unhuman and inhuman are words whose etymology makes them near of kin. But usage has made the word inhuman mean not only not human but worse than human. It is scarcely a travesty upon certain systems of religion to say that their conception of God is inhuman. And it is common to find such conceptions entertained by people who do not regard themselves as Christians, and who bar themselves from the Church by the ill-proportioned image of the Divine Being which they have constructed.

Can you not see the thought of Jesus flashing out everywhere in this chapter, that the character of God is to be vindicated and comprehended by an appeal to and a comparison with the best instincts of human

nature? When these stories are read to you, you applaud them. You say that what was done by the owners and the Father was the right thing. Exactly so. Because there is, in the universal instinct of humanity, a love of magnanimity—an admiration for pity and compassion. Our Lord does not in this lesson argue from heaven downward, but from earth upward. He does not begin with the things we do not know, in His effort to give us right conceptions. He builds upon common knowledge. He talks about familiar things and makes them the premise in His argument. He appeals to the best human impulse, and finds in that something to which He can liken God. Supposing a certain condition, "what man of you" would not do thus and so? Everybody would. All vote for it as the right thing to do. Very well. If it is the universal instinct—if it is the impulse with which human hearts so generally sympathize—if it is the only prompting with which your hearts could be content, why should you think of God as inhuman, and deny Him the right to be just a little like your own heart at its best?

It is altogether too common for our good, that we put the human and the Divine at right angles, instead of parallels. So many of us think that to be human necessarily means utter unlikeness to God, and that to be human is to be wrong. If "To err is human, to forgive, divine," then there must have been a multi-

tude of divine beings robed in flesh since history began; for many a wanderer has come home to hearts that were warm and glad. The couplet is enough of epigram to lodge in memory, but if it is true, it must lift to the level of divine emotions the pity of fatherhood and the poetry of a mother's heart. To err is all too common for quiet consciences. And to forgive is divine, but it is human, too, where love is. There are some things we must unlearn before we can do our Heavenly Father justice.

As one looks at you, one does not find you absolutely original and unique. There are so many things about you which one has seen before, that you appear to be like a reprint of some older volume. Some of your features would fit the portraits of a century ago. Your gestures were familiar to the friends of your grandfather, perhaps, long years before you were even near enough to be a prophecy. Some noble action of yours—we see it and applaud it—but an old man whispers to us: “She is so like her mother.” Your thought—it is high and holy—and it is yours; it is yours now, because you utter it and you mean it. But perhaps it is not all yours. If we could go back through the past and listen to all the sires and dames whose names are on your family tree, we might learn how you came to think it. Bulwer (in “The Caxtons”) said: “We cannot think

or act, but the soul of some man, who has lived before, points the way. The dead never die."

Many a soul has gone off on a little psychological tour of its own to discover the origin and source of its emotions and its bent, and some have concluded, not only that these feelings had an earlier origin than in ourselves, but that there must have been a succession of existences—a transmigration of souls—whereby we have retained certain impressions and feelings, but have forgotten the details of the other life we lived. In that interesting psychological study given us by the deaf and blind girl, Helen Keller, in the story of her life, there is the same recognition of feelings and impulses that are ours and yet older than we are, but there is the conclusion that heredity is responsible for them, just as it is responsible for many physical and mental characteristics. But in the study of heredity, you have two lines to trace, and these branch out in an interminable way when you go back far enough. You must study every life that could have possible influence upon yours. That you are different from your father may only mean that the tendencies which crop out in you had skipped a generation. But if you are going to study heredity as the source of many present impulses—and there is no doubt you must—why should you leave out of account the Divine Being whose will and nature have had most to do with the creation of man, and after

whose likeness man was set apart from the beasts of the field—was made to stand upright and was given mental and moral attributes which mean an increasing mastery over the forces of the world? When you study heredity do not forget God. One poet has expressed the thought:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar;
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home.
 Heaven lies about our infancy.”

There are emotions and impulses in us which we know instinctively to be right, and which put us in sympathy with what we read of God. There is a sense in which they seem divine, and yet they are ours. Why should we not look upon them as the strain which Divine paternity has left with our yet imperfect natures? And may not this explain how we dare speak of any likeness to God in our better selves? Why should we forever discount the good traits and generous impulses in men and give them but qualified approval, as if we feared that they must be bad because they are human? Nobody has enough goodness, perhaps, to be very much puffed up about it, but we know goodness when we see it or when we feel it. And if we were rational we should thank

God for every good impulse of our souls, and look upon it as His mark in our moral natures.

We have dwelt upon this thought in the hope that some worthy people who imagine themselves far off from God may be set free from an abnormal way of thinking. Every good tendency or impulse means likeness to God—a likeness which you may be grateful for never having lost. That it may have growth and expansion is the Divine desire. Do not stand afar off, in the court of the strangers, but draw nearer, in filial trustfulness, and let the warmth of His love bring to life and fruition still other qualities that are Godlike and yet possible for the man who fellowships with Him. Above all, do not harbor the thought that in coming to Him you need abandon any good work upon which your heart is set, or that you must crush out any noble aspiration. If your thoughts are worthy, they are not only yours but His, and they have come down to you through the years as a legacy from Him.

THE PERSISTENCE OF DIVINE LOVE.

But our Lord makes this appeal to the likeness between human nature and the Divine in order to emphasize the persistence of Divine love. The old-time shepherd-instinct involved a life of utter absorption in the welfare of the flock. He who kept them knew their names, and led them into green pastures

and by cooling streams, and at night-fall brought them into sheltered places. If one wandered he sought it, and brought it back. If one was lame or weak, he bore it in his arms. The care of the flock was his business by day and by night. But our Lord would have the people know that the instinct of the shepherd is the instinct of God. No night of ceaseless search for one lost sheep could be more earnest or absorbing than the thought of God for a soul gone wrong.

When does the shepherd's time of rejoicing come? When the lost sheep is found. God is the Shepherd, and that, too, is His time for rejoicing. Until then there is a sense of loss. Our training has too often made us think of our Heavenly Father as a Being whose happiness is in no wise involved in our wandering or our conversion; that He might plan some penalty for wandering, but the minstrelsy of heaven would be just as sweet without us; that He may prefer to keep us night after night on our knees at a mourner's bench, or hold us to the saying of so many "Pater nosters" or "Ave Marias," before He can choose to be gracious. This chapter does not put it in that way. His love emphasizes His loss. And the sense of loss means unrest and dissatisfaction and search. We do not understand how this can be. And the only explanation of our Lord is in an appeal to human nature in its sense of loss. "What would you

do?" You would not rest until you had resorted to every expedient to find the wanderer. That is just what God was doing. He had thundered from Sinai. He had sent countless prophets. He had established the ancient Church. And last of all He was sending His Son. Could greater illustration be, that His great Soul was not at peace?

The inference is that Heaven is not Heaven, in the fulness of its beatific meaning, so long as souls are not at peace with God. Its choirs do not chant so loudly. Its peace is far from full. The outburst of its melody awaits your coming. Your absence mars its peace. We do not know how to picture anxiety and longing on the face of the Great King. But we are required to think how we should feel, and how the shepherd feels when the flock is incomplete. "Until he find it." This is the sort of persistence in the search which Christ attributes to the ideal shepherd, and He means that God is Shepherd, too.

But why does He speak of just one lost—one sheep, one coin, one boy? Should there be so much ado about so little? If He spoke of numbers, we should lose the feeling of individuality, the sense of personal interest in the souls of men. He means us to feel that, to realize that one of us, every one of us, counts for something in the peace of Heaven. He wants us to realize that the Fatherhood of God cannot make choice of souls which He is willing to have lost.

He wants us to strip each life of its belongings and the place assigned it in the social scale by the accident of birth, and to know that He holds it precious for itself. Whether He cares for you or me we might not know, if the singular number were not preserved throughout all these stories. But though we may not be very good or very great, each of us counts for one. And it is just for one that the Shepherd seeks.

Oh, that the knowledge of this persistent love might move every unshepherded soul to turn his steps toward home! "Until he find it." What a search to make for so little reward! And to start the joy of heaven in an outburst of triumphant melody, what great recognition for a man's redemption! We can test it, if we can do no more. And when tempted by some evil influence to feel that we count for nothing in the estimate of Heaven, let us cling to this story and its illustration of our value in the sight of a loving God. May the thought of it lead us home to Him!

And may the preacher's earnest prayer be answered, that these sermons in the Open-Air may have helped some reader to realize a brighter earth, a better heaven, and a nearer God!

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